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THE CHARITABLE RELATIONSHIP:
PARENTS, CHILDREN AND THE WAIFS AND STRAYS SOCIETY

HARRIET WARD
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL POLICY AND PLANNING
UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL
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A thesis submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements of the degree of Ph.D. in the Faculty of Social Sciences

ABSTRACT

HARRIET WARD: THE CHARITABLE RELATIONSHIP: PARENTS, CHILDREN AND THE WAIFS AND STRAYS SOCIETY

University of Bristol, Ph. D Thesis. September, 1990

This thesis examines the case-papers of a group of four hundred children who were admitted to one of the major voluntary societies (the Church of England Incorporated Society for Providing Homes for Waifs and Strays, now the Children's Society) between 1887 and 1894. It looks at the reasons why their parents agreed to their admission, the motivation of those who engineered the separation and the effects of the intervention upon the children's subsequent careers. It also examines the structural framework of the society, and identifies the pressures which moulded its policies and practices. The Waifs and Strays was a charity, dependent upon the good will of its supporters for both its foundation and its continuing existence. Central to the argument is the recognition that few gifts of time, money or effort are entirely disinterested; the disparate aims of those who referred children to the society, those who maintained them while in its care, and those who offered them subsequent employment are examined in some detail. Even in the nineteenth century, only a minority of children who came into care were orphans, and even fewer were completely without interested relatives: one of the more problematic aspects of the child-saver's task was (and still is) the management of the relationship between the separated child and his natural family: then, as now, this was an overriding issue, and it has been given particular prominence in this work. Finally, this thesis rests on the assumption that a thorough understanding of current practice cannot be reached without some awareness of historical precedents: although the study of a nineteenth century child care organisation is of considerable interest in its own right, it raises a number of issues which are of immediate relevance today.

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Finally, this thesis would not have been written without the enormous encouragement I have received from my husband, Christopher. He has done everything possible to ensure that I had sufficient time to devote to the project; any credit for its completion should go to him.

DECLARATION

I, THE UNDERSIGNED DECLARE THAT THIS THESIS HAS NOT BEEN ALREADY ACCEPTED IN SUBSTANCE FOR ANY DEGREE AND THAT IT IS NOT CONCURRENTLY SUBMITTED FOR CONSIDERATION FOR ANY DEGREE.

THE THESIS IS THE RESULT OF MY INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATIONS.

Signed:.....

(HARRIET WARD)

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NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

The English language does not possess a neutral pronoun, and it is clumsy to refer to each child continually as 'him or her'. I have thus taken the words 'child' and 'children' to be masculine throughout, on the assumption that readers will understand that this usage is intended to be generic, and not to denote a particular sex.

To preserve anonymity, the sample children are identified in the footnotes by the numbers they were given in the study. The reference numbers of their case-papers can be produced on application. The original Waifs and Strays reference numbers are only given for children who fall outside the study sample.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION, SOURCES, AND METHODOLOGY

PART I: INTRODUCTION AND SOURCES

A potent myth informs our understanding of the early work of the children's voluntary societies. Most accounts of the lives of their founders are written as hagiographies; Thomas Bowman Stephenson, Rudolf of the Waifs and Strays and, particularly, Barnardo, are depicted as saintly men, moved by a spirit of Christian charity to rescue the hordes of destitute orphans who haunted the streets of the major cities (1). It is assumed that all the actions of the societies' many representatives were inspired by the same selfless benevolence. While their philanthropic objectives are not in doubt, this is, nevertheless, a simplistic view : it is the purpose of this thesis to unravel the complexities of the relationship between those who worked for and supported the voluntary societies, the children whom they rescued and the relatives who relinquished their care. Although this thesis does not set out to debunk the myth, the research incidentally reveals that a number of firmly entrenched beliefs are factually incorrect: children who entered the societies in the nineteenth century were not invariably orphans, they did not always come from the urban slums, and there is at least some doubt as to the extent to which they benefited by the intervention.

There is, however, no doubt that the major children's charities such as Barnardo's, the National Children's Home, the Children's Society and the NSPCC have played a vital role in the development of policies towards

deprived children. They were influential in the drafting of legislation which has, throughout the last hundred years, served to regulate the relationship between separated children, their parents and the third parties who cared for them. They have taken an active part in the debate over the most appropriate forms of care for these children, and in matters such as the provision of industrial schools in the nineteenth century, or the development of fostering for older children in more recent years, they have tended to blaze a trail for the more conservative public sector to follow. Today, although the extent of their provision has diminished, they still play an important role in experimenting with innovative schemes, in commissioning research and in advising policy-makers (2). Thus a close examination of the early policies and practice of one of these societies would appear to provide a fruitful source of information about a number of more general child care issues.

This thesis examines the case-papers of a group of four hundred children who were admitted to one of the major voluntary societies (the Church of England Incorporated Society for Providing Homes for Waifs and Strays, now the Children's Society) shortly after its foundation. It looks at the reasons why their parents agreed to their admission, the motivation of those who engineered the separation and the effects of the intervention upon the children's subsequent development. It also examines the structural framework of the Society, and identifies the pressures which moulded its policies and practices. The Waifs and Strays was, of course, a charity, dependent upon the good will of its supporters for both its foundation and its continuing existence. Central to the argument is the

recognition that few gifts of time, money or effort are entirely disinterested; the disparate aims of those who referred children to the Society, those who maintained them while in its care, and those who offered them subsequent employment are examined in some detail. Even in the nineteenth century, only a minority of children who came into care were orphans, and even fewer were completely without interested relatives: one of the more problematic aspects of the child-saver's task was (and still is) the management of the relationship between the separated child and his natural family: then, as now, this was an overriding issue, and it has been given particular prominence in this work. Finally, this thesis rests on the assumption that a thorough understanding of current practice cannot be reached without some awareness of historical precedents: although the study of a nineteenth century child care organisation is of considerable interest in its own right, it raises a number of issues which are of immediate relevance today.

Historical Context

For a period of about forty years, from the time that changes in technology and restrictive legislation began to make it difficult for juveniles to find work in factories, to the enforcement of compulsory schooling in the late 1870s, large numbers of children were unemployed and unsupervised during the day-time. Their obvious neglect was difficult to ignore, and increasingly became a cause for public concern, as is evident from the large number of public enquiries into the circumstances of deprived and destitute children that were held in the latter part of

the century (3) . A concrete manifestation of this concern is to be seen in the foundation of the major children's rescue societies towards the end of the period: Quarrier's Homes were founded in 1864, Dr Stephenson's Home (The National Children's Home) in 1869, Dr Barnardo's in 1870, the Liverpool Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (now the NSPCC) in 1883, and the Waifs and Strays Society (The Children's Society) in 1884.

It seemed evident that a number of parents were either unwilling or unable to fulfil their duties towards their children; initially the debate centred around the dangers inherent in allowing them to relinquish their responsibilities, but with the establishment of the rescue societies the focus shifted to the problem of determining the extent to which a parent who was manifestly unfit could thereby forfeit his right to custody. The extensively reported habeas corpus cases fought by Barnardo in the courts served to raise public awareness of the issues concerned (4). The children in the study sample were all admitted to the Waifs and Strays during the years 1887-1894: the period was chosen because it covers the years in which the debate was at its most intense, and was finding concrete expression in changes in the law. The Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act, and the Poor Law Amendment Act were passed in 1889; the Custody of Children Act and the Industrial Schools Amendment Act in 1891. These Acts, together with the earlier industrial schools legislation, which dates from 1857 onwards, formed the legal basis for the management of the relationship between natural parents, children and child care organisations (5). They provided a structure for transferring the custody

of children to third parties, which endured for a hundred years.

Developments in the Law

The study begins by tracing the developing concept of parental rights and duties as embodied in the emerging legislation: this chapter is not integral to the argument of the thesis and can be omitted by those who do not require a specialist knowledge of the legal background to the Society's policies. Nevertheless, it should be emphasised that such an understanding sets the workings of the Waifs and Strays Society within the broader context of its time. Developments in public law were paralleled by the emergence of a 'welfare principle' in the Court of Chancery: it is clear that the issues concerning the Society were not minor problems that exercised the minds of the relatively few people involved in the care of the four hundred children under scrutiny, but were major concerns of the day.

The remainder of the thesis relies heavily on the evidence from the sample of case-papers. Information from these, and other contemporary sources, is used to develop the following argument.

Responsibilities towards Children in Need

In the nineteenth century, the most difficult question faced by all those concerned with the care of separated children was how to rescue those who were manifestly in need without diminishing their parents' sense of responsibility. The case-papers provide a wealth of information as to the

causes of the children's deprivation: low wages, the prevalence of casual labour, ill health or the loss of a breadwinner had placed many of their families on the brink of destitution and were a precipitating factor in the majority of admissions. Yet in spite of an increasing body of evidence as to its structural causes, contemporary observers still persisted in regarding poverty as a moral failing. Destitute parents were not seen as incapable of providing adequate care, but as unwilling to do so. Those who offered assistance rendered themselves liable to the accusation that they were encouraging dependency (6).

The 1834 Poor Law represented a concerted attempt to discourage dependency. Under its precepts, outdoor relief to the able-bodied was strongly resisted. The possibility that some were unable to provide for themselves or their families was, at least in theory, inadmissible. The recommended alternative to independence was not outdoor relief (although in reality this proved impossible to eradicate), but separation: admission to the workhouse not only entailed separation from the community, but also the segregation of different family members. Within the workhouse, husbands and wives were placed in different wards, and children were often placed apart, in a separate building, sometimes at a considerable distance from their parents.

The voluntary societies regarded it as one of their major functions to criticise the care offered to children under the Poor Law. Nevertheless, they did not question the underlying ideology. Most of them were heavily influenced by, and even dependent upon the goodwill, of the Charity Organisation Society (founded 1869), a body whose declared aim was

to eradicate mendicity by cutting off the flow of indiscriminate alms (7). This extremely powerful organisation acted as a restraint on those private individuals and charitable societies that were tempted to devalue the self-reliance of the poor by offering direct assistance in cash or in kind. The ideological opposition to dependency made it politically unwise for any voluntary organisation to offer grants or pensions to destitute families to enable them to support their children at home. In the private, as in the public sector, financial assistance was discouraged, and separation was considered to be the only acceptable solution. Even then, most parents were expected to contribute substantially towards their children's maintenance: an examination of the Society's finances demonstrates the considerable contortions it was forced to undergo in order to square the expectations of its supporters with the reality of the parents' circumstances (8).

Most parents were unable to contribute more than nominal sums to the maintenance of their separated children. Their failure to do more was regarded as proof of their unwillingness to accept their responsibilities, and may well have encouraged the popular policy of severance. The right to custody was regarded as being dependent upon the parent's fulfilling his obligation to maintain; parents who had 'refused' to maintain young children were criticised when they tried to reclaim adolescents as they became economically independent (9).

Training and Control

The dependency of able-bodied adults was feared because it led to

mendicancy and unrest. Those who 'refused' to earn an honest living, lived on the margins of society, resorting to begging or petty crime in order to survive. Events in Europe in 1848, and the Paris commune of 1871 had vividly demonstrated the dangers posed by the existence of a dispossessed underclass. Periodic riots in Britain throughout the century, culminating perhaps in the massive demonstrations of the unemployed in 1886 and 1887, emphasised the reality of the threat at home. Fears of unrest were exacerbated by evidence of a decline in the influence of religion (10).

The solution was not to raise wages or to improve the conditions of employment, but to repress the unruly element in society. The ideological rejection of outdoor relief and the introduction of the workhouse were intended to force those who refused to support themselves to submit to the values of the majority. At a time when the influence of Darwin's theories had opened up limitless possibilities on the one hand, and the science of eugenics had yet to be discredited by Nazi Germany on the other, draconian schemes to reduce the 'surplus population' by compulsory emigration, incarceration or enforced sterilisation, achieved a degree of respectability (11).

It was, however, not only more acceptable, but also easier, to reform the destitute by reclaiming the next generation. The voluntary societies claimed to remove children from the squalor of their early surroundings and train them for a better life. Their evangelical inspiration ensured that the training had a strong religious element, and strengthened the perception that children were being saved not only from squalor, but also

from perdition. The widespread presumption that the majority of parents were not only unfit, but also sinful, encouraged the adoption of policies intended to sever the relationship (12).

Such policies, however, were not entirely successful. Many parents who had been popularly suspected of being only too anxious to be relieved of their responsibilities, had no intention of relinquishing their children for life. They took considerable pains to visit and to write to them. They resisted the propaganda that emphasised the advantages of life in Canada, and refused to consent to their children's emigration. Those who lost faith in the societies' ability to provide superior care insisted on premature discharge. On the other hand, parents' reluctance to agree to severance was matched by the societies' insistence that relatives should be required to resume the care of children who seemed likely to remain permanently dependent.

Children were referred largely by single, middle class women, as part of their traditional duty towards the poor. The training offered by the societies reflected the complex motivation of their supporters. The acquisition of marketable skills was valued less highly than the adherence to a new set of values. Discipline, conformity and cleanliness were encouraged at the expense of individuality and initiative. The societies' supporters valued these qualities not so much in their equals as in their subordinates. The children were taught respectability rather than independence; their role was to support the old established order by finding employment as domestic servants. The patronage of a middle-class sponsor or employer was intended to replace the severed relationship with

parents. However, although service provided shelter as well as employment, few employers were prepared to offer the extensive support required by immature and inexperienced adolescents. Those who were not reunited with their parents required the continued protection of the Society well past the age at which, in theory, they became financially independent.

Background and Nineteenth Century Sources

Although the developing law has been chosen as a focus for setting the study within its historical framework, legal changes were only one strand in a much wider debate on the care of separated children, which became a prominent issue in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Much of the contemporary material is still readily available. Published sources include a wealth of official documents such as law reports, Hansard debates, parliamentary papers, and the regular annual reports from the Poor Law Commissioners and the Inspector of Reformatories and Industrial Schools. Changes in the law have to be pieced together from reports on individual cases, the societies' own pamphlets of advice to their workers and treatises such as Blackstone's Commentaries on the Laws of England(13) and Simpson on Infants(14) which would have been available to the lawyers of the day. However, the wider debate is easier to follow: amongst the major inquiries which contributed to the discussion were commissions on The Education of Destitute and Pauper Children (1861)(15), the Boarding Out of Pauper Children in Scotland (1870)(16), Infant Life Protection (1870 and 1890) (17), the Emigration of Pauper Children to Canada (1875)(18), Reformatories and Industrial

Schools (1884)(19), Poor Law Relief (1888)(20), the Education and Maintenance of Pauper Children in the Metropolis (1896)(21), and both the Minority and Majority Reports of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws (1909)(22).

The voluntary societies took a central role in this debate. They criticised the established methods of caring for poor law children, promoted their own more liberal regimes, and lobbied for new legislation. The Reformatory and Refuge Union, the Charity Organisation Society, the NSPCC, the Church of England Waifs and Strays Society, Dr Barnardo's and Dr Stephenson's Homes, were amongst a number of organisations which published monthly or weekly journals in which they argued their case. These are still readily available (23).

Criticism of the accepted methods of caring for separated children came not only from the voluntary societies, but also from those working within the poor law system. Delegates to the annual Poor Law Conferences discussed questions such as the rights of natural parents, and the most appropriate methods of bringing up the children of paupers. Critical reports such as those of Florence Davenport Hill (1868)(24) Jane Nassau Senior (1874)(25), and the Mundella Committee (1896)(26) elicited a flurry of response; works intended to refute the findings of the Mundella Committee in particular, such as Chance's Children under the Poor Law (1897)(27), contributed another dimension to the debate.

However the argument was not confined to those few philanthropists, poor law officials and politicians for whom the care of separated children was a matter of immediate concern. Then, as now, the issues were of

considerable public interest: social explorers such as James Greenwood and George Sims publicised the scandals of baby-farming and adoption through sensational books and articles (28). The Pall Mall Gazette's series of articles on Modern Babylon(29) were intended to alert the public to the scandal of child prostitution. More sober articles were published in a variety of periodicals intended to reach the wider public, such as the Nineteenth Century Magazine, the Contemporary Review and the Edinburgh Review. The issues surrounding changes in the law regularly formed the subject of editorial comment in The Times.

Concern about the the care of neglected children was inextricably bound up with questions about the condition of the poor. Charles Booth's carefully researched survey of the Life and Labour of the People of London(1889-1903)(30) was the most comprehensive in a long line of attempts to gain scientific information about the lives of the poor. It was followed by Seebohm Rowntree's more sophisticated analysis of urban poverty in York (31), matched in 1913 by his lesser known examination of rural conditions (32). Both Booth and Rowntree's work have been extensively used in this study as sources of objective information against which to compare the children's home circumstances.

Charles Booth was among those researchers who suggested forcible segregation as the only viable method of dealing with the unfit (33). More explicit plans were advocated in polemics such as William Booth's In Darkest England and the Way Out(34), the published speeches of Samuel Smith M.P.(35), and in some of the publicity material from the more aggressive voluntary societies, for instance Barnardo's: The King's

Business Requireth Haste(36).

Many of the regular publications deteriorate in quality or peter out after the first world war. Statistical information, in particular, is far harder to come by thereafter. This has not been a problem in the present study, which is almost entirely focussed on an earlier period, but could cause concern to other researchers.

Much of the published material is fairly easily available in university libraries, and a number of the books are still in print; there also exist a quantity of unpublished sources which have as yet been largely unresearched. During this period the voluntary societies all appear to have kept detailed records of the children admitted, and these have survived virtually intact. In addition to the Waifs and Strays material, I have also looked briefly at unpublished nineteenth century papers from the Middlemore Emigration homes in Birmingham, Dr Stephenson's Homes (the National Children's Home), and the Charity Organisation Society. I have also examined the records of the Boarding-Out Committees set up in conjunction with the boards of guardians in Birmingham and Bath.

Secondary Sources

The care of separated children has not elicited much research interest until the last decade or so. The only substantial analyses of nineteenth century records of which I am aware are Parr's study of children emigrated by Dr Barnardo's Homes between 1868 and 1924 (37), and Parker's researches on the official returns of children leaving the London poor law

schools during the 1880s. The latter is still being prepared for publication (38). Wagner quotes freely from the records of juvenile emigrants in her Children of the Empire (39), but she uses them for descriptive purposes rather than as a basis for statistical analysis. Although some children from my Waifs and Strays sample were emigrated, the majority remained in England. Behlmer used a small sample of nineteenth century NSPCC records in his analysis of issues surrounding child abuse (40). However, as far as I know, mine is the first systematic attempt to analyse a comprehensive sample of early case histories of separated children who remained in England.

Although the Greater London Record Office has preserved the records of several of the major district schools, these have not yet been subjected to critical analysis. Such an enterprise is likely to prove rewarding: contemporary hints from my research suggest that life for poor law children in these schools may have been far more pleasant than we have been led to believe. The early records of reformatories and industrial schools have been studied by both Carlebach (41) and Rimmer (42), but again there is ample scope for further research.

It is probably due to the poor quality of records and publications after the First World War that there has been virtually no research on the care of separated children between about 1918 and the publication of the Curtis Report in 1946 (43). The only attempt to study this period in depth that I know of is Middleton's book: When Family Failed (44).

There are, however, several historical accounts of the development of the child care service, which shed light on both nineteenth and

twentieth century issues. Parker's history of provisions for separated children is particularly relevant to the current study (45). Of the more general works, Heywood's study of Children in Care(46) follows their history back to an earlier date, but in most other respects has been superseded by Pinchbeck and Hewitt's more comprehensive account of Children in English Society . They describe how the position and treatment of children has developed from Tudor times to 1948 (47). Packman's work on The Child's Generation continues the story to the 1975 Children Act (48). Hopkirk's Nobody Wanted Sam (49) examines the history of the illegitimate child. Some of the American work on the psychohistory of childhood, led by Lloyd de Mause (50), is of peripheral interest, although the care of separated children has not been a major focus for their studies.

The major voluntary societies have all published histories of their work, but these tend to eulogise the founder rather than give a straightforward account of the society's development. Wagner's biography of Barnardo (51) presents by far the most sophisticated analysis of the work of one major philanthropist, while Rose's recent history of the society he founded also adopts an objective point of view (52). Stroud's account of the growth of the Waifs and Strays (53), Manton's biography of Mary Carpenter (54), and Davey's account of Stephenson's life (55) also provide useful information.

The history of the Poor Law has received greater attention than that of the child care system. Longmate's The Workhouse(56) and Digby's Pauper Palaces (57) both illuminate what it must have been like to be an

indoor pauper; Crowther's study of The Workhouse System(58) gives a helpful account of how the system evolved.

Research on the Poor Law reinforces the perception that much nineteenth century social policy was coloured by the threat posed by a potentially insurgent underclass. Several authors have examined this theme in some detail: Stedman-Jones gives an illuminating discussion of the various schemes for incarceration or sterilisation of the destitute (59). Platt's work makes it clear that fears of moral degeneration and the existence of a hereditary criminal class were also preoccupations of American society (60). Although the evidence from the present study supports the argument that the care system was initially conceived as a means of social control, the theme is not so predominant in this thesis as it is in, for instance, Meyer's Children of the State(61), or Platt's The Child Savers(62).

Although this thesis is primarily concerned with the historical care of children it touches on a number of other related issues. Other areas of historical research which I have found to be of particular value have been Stedman-Jones' work on casual labour (63), Hollis'(64) and Vicinus'(65) work on the changing role of women, Mills'(66) examination of patronage, Davidoff's (67) analysis of the function of 'society' and Horn's (68) research into domestic service. I have found Burnett's social histories of diet and the cost of living to be particularly useful (69). His collections of short autobiographies of working people have provided illustrations for several points in the discussion (70). Anderson's research on nineteenth century kinship

networks provides a different perspective for, as will be seen below, my evidence does not tally with his conclusions (71). This may be because he was examining a slightly earlier period.

Although there have been few historical analyses of child care records, in the last decade or so a body of contemporary research has begun to build up. The earlier studies to touch on these issues are Parker's Decision in Child Care (1966) (72) and George's Foster Care: Theory and Practice (73) (1970). In the 1970s, Tizard studied the outcomes for different groups of children who had experienced institutional care (74). More recently, Rowe has published influential work on children who languish in care (75) and on long-term fostering (76); Packman has compared the experiences of groups of children who were considered, but not all admitted, to care in the early 1980s (77). John Triseliotis has examined many of the issues surrounding adoption (78). Thoburn, Berridge and Cleaver have all studied the factors which contribute to success and failure in foster-placements (79). Contemporary studies which appear most strongly to re-echo the findings of this thesis are the Dartington Group's work on the preservation of links between children in care and their families (80), Stein and Carey's work on leaving care (81), and Farmer's research into children who are placed at home on trial (82).

However the main basis of this thesis does not come from published sources in the nineteenth or twentieth century, but from the analysis of the four hundred case records of children admitted to the Waifs and Strays

Society between the years 1887 and 1894. The notes made by middle-class women, clergymen and secretaries of vigilance societies when recommending admission, the letters written from the matrons of homes to the executive of the Society, their replies and the letters that have been preserved from parents and children themselves, provide a substantial basis of first-hand information which sheds a new light on both modern and contemporary published material.

I have used both my data and the material described above to look at a number of different aspects of the subject. The records provide a wealth of information regarding the children's home circumstances, their parents' attitudes towards admission and the reasons why referrers felt separation to be desirable. Thus I have been able to add something to our understanding of the nature of the relationship that existed between parents, children, the middle-class women who usually referred them, and the clergy who supported the applications. When aggregated, the data from individual case-papers also demonstrates the effectiveness of the Waifs and Strays' policies, and this has been compared with the Society's published statements about such matters as severance and emigration. Finally, the records are sufficiently comprehensive to make it possible to follow most of the children through a range of placements from admission to final discharge: thus I have uncovered new information about the experiences of those who were received into care during the period when the legislative structure for our current system was being introduced. In particular I have been able to assess the extent to which separation improved their long-term prospects in

adulthood.

PART II: METHODOLOGY

Between 1st January 1887 and 31 December 1894, 3727 children were admitted to the Waifs and Strays Society. Table 1.1 shows the number of applications that were made, and the percentage that were accepted, in each year. It is clear from these figures that not only the demand, but also the number of places available, tended to fluctuate quite markedly from one year to the next. In a later chapter I will make some attempt to explain these discrepancies, but the point at issue here is that admission rates were so variable that more than twice as many children entered the Society's care in 1893 as in 1887. As one purpose of this study was to examine whether policies changed over a specific period of time, it seemed advisable to weight the sample so that the same number of cases was drawn from each of the years under scrutiny. Thus instead of examining every ninth or tenth case in the series, I used tables of random numbers to identify fifty children placed with the Society in each year of the study. In its annual reports the Society published brief details of all the children admitted during each year. This information, which produced slightly different figures from the published statistics, was used as a basis from which to draw the random sample.

Construction of the Questionnaire

An initial pilot study of thirty cases examined the extent of the

TABLE 1.1

CHILDREN ADMITTED TO THE WAIFS AND STRAYS SOCIETY 1887-1894
(Figures extracted from published statistics and case summaries)

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>ACCEPTED</u>	<u>REJECTED</u>	<u>% ACCEPTED</u>	<u>% OF STUDY POPULATION ADMITTED</u>
1887	304	NK	NK	8%
1888	528	326	62%	14%
1889	536	197	73%	14%
1890	400	205	66%	11%
1891	376	200	65%	10%
1892	403	241	63%	11%
1893	617	180	77%	17%
1894	563	128	81%	15%
<hr/>				
TOTALS	3727	NK	Average % accepted 71	100%

information generally available for each child. On the basis of these findings a questionnaire was drawn up through which the information was categorised and quantified. This is a lengthy document, and is not included here, but is available on request.

The first part of the questionnaire was applicable to all the children in the sample. It sought to categorise the data from the case-papers in order to draw up a general profile of the children and their family backgrounds. Thus information about each child's age, initial address, legitimacy, siblings, and the reason for admission was sought. Questions were also asked about parents' employment, income, literacy, and the referee's view of their respectability. Some attempt was made to assess the extent of disruption each family had suffered before applying to the Society, and so information was elicited about the whereabouts of parents, and the placements of children and their siblings prior to admission. A useful indicator of disruption was found by asking whether children had been living with parents and/or siblings prior to admission, and if not, how long they had been separated. The questionnaire was also designed to discover the degree of support that disrupted families had been receiving from relatives and the wider community prior to the application for admission; a specific question asked whether there had been any involvement from outside agencies such as the NSPCC or the poor law authority.

The general part of the questionnaire was also designed to trace the care histories of the children after admission. Because this study is largely concerned with the effect of admission on family relationships,

particular consideration was given to the distances between placements and the child's original address, and to evidence of attempts to deny or restrict access. A subgroup of children returned to their parents before discharge had been recommended by the Society. These were given particular attention.

Although the Society did receive a treasury allowance for committed children, and some support from boards of guardians, its main source of income came from voluntary subscriptions and donations. It seemed possible that, at least in some instances, policy would be affected by the views of subscribers. Questions about financial support were inserted in order to test this hypothesis. As the admissions agreements revealed (see below), a parent's liability to support his child could be used to manipulate the relationship with the Society: the small group of parents from whom financial support was required are given particular attention in the questionnaire.

The second part of the questionnaire was designed to elicit information about specific groups of children and is therefore not applicable to the whole sample. The questions attempt to assess both the extent of severance and the compensations the Society was able to provide for the loss of family links. Thus the subgroups which came under particular scrutiny were children who emigrated or were adopted, those who, in theory, had the opportunity to develop a compensatory relationship with foster parents, and those who had a sibling in the Society's care. In spite of the introduction of compulsory education, children of the very poor were still under pressure to leave school early and take the first job available in

order to supplement the family income. Information about employment and subsequent careers was available for a further subgroup of children in the sample, and questions in this area were intended to discover what opportunities they had had for training and acquiring marketable skills. Further questions were designed to assess whether the extent of support offered by the Society as older children made the transition towards an independent, adult life was designed to compensate for the absence of parental links. Some children maintained or renewed their relationship with the Society in adulthood, and questions about the purpose of later contacts and the responses they received, provided additional information.

As must be evident from the above, the questionnaire was designed to include as much relevant information as possible; although some of the results have not been sufficiently significant for comment in this report, their inclusion in the general data-base has been of invaluable assistance in defining the scope of the study and in developing cross-checks. The questionnaire was used to quantify the information available on all four hundred cases in the sample. This was then analysed using the computer programme SPSSx.

Extent of Information Available

The set of records deposited by the Society in the Greater London Record Office appears to be virtually intact. Every single case-paper in the sample was accessible. Papers were filed according to the date of the child's admission to the Society: five of the original sample cases had

been filed out of sequence: where a case was identified as belonging to a different year of admission, a substitute was found. One child turned out never to have been admitted to the Society, and in one instance two case-papers were found to refer to the same child; again additional cases were chosen to complete the sample. These were the only alterations made to the original four hundred cases chosen at random.

Almost all case-papers contained an application form plus a collection of relevant letters written to headquarters from referees, supervisors, residential staff and parents. Many records also held copies of Rudolf's replies. These were more numerous after the Society had acquired a typewriter in the 1890s: although no day-to-day account was kept of each child's progress, it seems likely that the later case-papers in the sample were amongst the most comprehensive records kept by the Society, as they were compiled at a time when the postal service was extremely efficient and had as yet lost nothing to the telephone. In addition to this general information, certain case-papers also held emigration documents, apprenticeship indentures, foster parent agreements, and in one instance, a formal contract of adoption. Some of the case-papers also contained letters written to Rudolf by adults who had grown up in the Society's care.

On the back of each application form was a brief summary: this gave the initial reply to the request for admission, some information about funding, and a list of the child's subsequent addresses. From these notes it was generally possible to piece together the child's care history: and thus for most children the number and type of placements was

easily ascertained. Additional letters often indicated the reasons for unexpected moves. These summaries had also been copied into ledgers held at the Society's headquarters, and these were used to cross-check the information available on the case-papers.

Although extensive information was available in the majority of cases, for two groups of children it was markedly absent. The case-papers of committed children rarely contained more than the original court order. This gave the child's name, age, religion, and the section of the Act under which proceedings had been taken. The town of residence was given, but there was no address or information about relatives. The other group who were very poorly documented were children residing in homes that were subsequently taken over by the Society. The majority of these had been originally placed by poor law authorities, who continued to pay a sum towards their subsistence. Although the matrons of these homes were required to complete an application form for every child transferred to the Society's care, they rarely answered more than one or two questions. Again, information about the child's parents and family was markedly lacking: in some cases there was no indication when a child had a sibling who was also in the care of the Waifs and Strays. It is, of course, possible that further information about these children was held separately, either at headquarters or in the homes themselves. However, the absence of information about their parents contrasts with the full details of the families of other children. Committed children, and to a lesser extent those under the Poor Law, were believed to come from homes that were, de facto, either unsatisfactory or non-existent. The minimal

background information given in such cases might well demonstrate how little concern there was to preserve their family ties.

It is possible that one series of documents has been systematically discarded from the files. Parents who requested admission for their children in the early years of the Society's existence were required to complete a formal agreement relinquishing care for a fixed period, usually until the child reached fourteen. This document also required them to agree to resume care if the child was expelled or dismissed from the homes for any reason; on the other hand, if the child was removed prematurely, without the consent of the executive committee, the agreement stated that the parents would be liable to reimburse the Society for the maintenance and educational expenses that had so far been incurred. All the major voluntary societies appear to have used similar contracts of admission; their legality and underlying purpose is further discussed in Chapters 2 and 6.

Although these agreements were filed with the case-papers of children admitted in 1882, they are not present on any of the papers in the sample. Either they were filed separately, and have subsequently been lost, or the Society had stopped using them by 1887. Information filed with the case-papers for one of the sample children suggests that the agreements may still have been used in 1891: in a letter to Rudolf about a mother who had kidnapped her daughter after promising not to unsettle her, the matron of the Leamington Home wrote: 'Mrs D... had refused to sign the agreement committing the child to the care of the society so I suppose we can do nothing to get the child back' (83). On the other hand, two of

the other sample case-papers contain letters which suggest that by this period admission agreements were by no means routinely used. Joseph C. and Bessie W. were both orphans whose parents had bequeathed small sums of money for their maintenance. The people who referred them for admission demanded a formal undertaking from the Society to maintain the children until adulthood in exchange for a lump sum; the purpose of these requests was clearly to insure against a sudden and unwelcome discharge, a risk that the admissions contracts had been designed to obviate (84).

Question 26 on the application form asked:

Are the parents, guardians or next of kin willing to sign an agreement to commit it wholly to the care of the society, to obey the rules in force, and to permit the said child when fully trained to be sent to any situation in the U.K. which may be obtained for it by the committee?

In one case a handwritten agreement was attached to the Society's papers, and in a number of others the parent formally signed the application form opposite this question. These examples suggest that, by the study period, parents were no longer being asked to sign a formal contract (85).

The use of contracts of admission appears to have been a matter of some controversy: the validity of those used by Barnardo was questioned by the courts in 1889 and 1890 (86). Their disappearance from the Waifs and Strays records following an initial period during which they were routinely present may well be significant: possibly Rudolf began by following the practice of the other societies and introducing similar contracts, but withdrew them later when their somewhat dubious legality became apparent. Such an explanation would be consonant with the scrupulous integrity that Rudolf appears to have displayed in his dealings

with parents who refused to agree to emigration (see Chapter 9).

Validity of Data

Although the information is of interest in its own right, some attempt has been made to enhance the value of the study by matching findings to other research wherever possible. Rowntree's detailed survey of poverty in York was almost contemporaneous with the Waifs and Strays data described here (87). Parent's earnings have thus been classified according to Rowntree's criteria, so that it is possible to make at least a rough estimate of how far the families in my sample matched the population he investigated. Stedman-Jones' research into the nineteenth century casual labour market covers the years examined in this study; his work has provided a useful reference point for my analysis of the data on the occupations of both parents and children in the Waifs and Strays sample (88).

The only major study of this nature to have been completed so far is Joy Parr's research on children who emigrated from Barnardo's between 1882 and 1908 (89). The Waifs and Strays questionnaire is designed to test whether Rudolf operated similar policies on juvenile emigration to those of Barnardo. One of the most interesting findings from Joy Parr's research concerns the extent to which Barnardo and his agents manipulated the relationship between parents and their separated children. This issue is given particular attention in the present study.

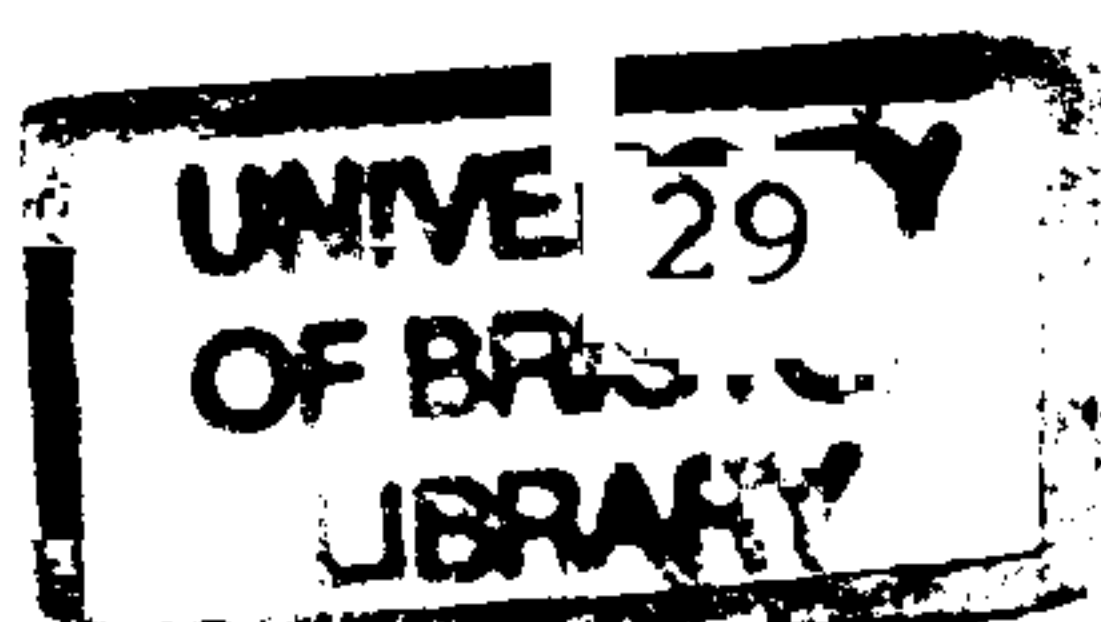
Although this thesis focusses on the early work of the voluntary societies, it also seeks to demonstrate a number of continuities between

the establishment of policies in the late nineteenth century and particular features of current practice. Thus the questionnaire was also designed to address some of the questions that have been posed by recent twentieth century studies. Specifically, the data on the preservation of family ties are intended to complement the findings of the Dartington Social Research Unit's study of the problem of maintaining links between children in care and their families (90).

Reliability of Data

In this type of archival research, where written information cannot be corroborated with other sources, the data must be treated with a certain degree of caution. It is impossible to estimate how much material has been lost or discarded. Thus it may be possible to tell from the records what did happen to a child, but it is impossible to estimate what did not. Omissions furnish no proof, for vital information may not have been written down , or may have been subsequently lost. Although, for instance, it is possible to count the number of children for whom there is evidence of continuing contact with their families of origin, where this information is lacking, there is still no proof that the relationship withered.

A note on John C.'s case-papers suggests that changes of foster parents were not always recorded if a child continued to reside in the same village and to be visited by the same lady supervisor. This particular child had such a large appetite that three different foster mothers found themselves unable to keep him on the allowance provided; only the



final move was officially noted. Presumably the supervisor considered that, where a child continued to remain in the same small village community and attend the same school, a change of home was not a major move, and perhaps this was a valid argument at the time (91). In many instances foster parents names were recorded, or signed agreements were found among the case-papers, so that it seems likely that the majority of moves have in fact been traced. Nevertheless, for the purposes of analysis, the reader should be aware that the number of placement changes need to be treated with some caution; the figures recorded should be regarded as giving minimum estimates rather than reliable numbers of moves, particularly where a child was fostered.

Although unpublished records are perhaps less likely to be distorted than those which were prepared for a wider audience, much of the information on the application forms will have been presented with the intention of securing the child's admission. Thus it is possible that parents may have underestimated their income in order to furnish proof of poverty and avoid excessive claims for maintenance. Parents and relatives only rarely applied directly to the Society for admission: the application forms were usually completed by middle-class referees whose perceptions of neglect and destitution may well have been distorted by their own opinions. Such considerations may particularly be true of children who were perceived to be at risk of sexual abuse from their parents (see Chapter 8).

The Society furnished its secretaries with a list of the grounds under which children might qualify for admission. In line with poor law

ideology, children of able-bodied fathers were not considered as acceptable cases. In theory, they could only be admitted if they were 'seriously neglected or ill-treated by [their] parents or guardians, or subject to immoral influences.' Evidence from the sample suggests that as many as 60% of the Waifs and Strays children of lone fathers came into this category. Although one might argue that single fathers were more likely to neglect or ill-treat their children, it seems at least possible that in some of these cases the referrer was tempted to exaggerate the ill-treatment in order to secure an admission.

The data were not invariably recorded accurately by those who completed the original admissions forms. There were, for instance, several case-papers in which the child's age did not correspond with the recorded date of birth. In these cases I chose to take the date of birth as being the more reliable indicator.

Thus a few arbitrary decisions were taken to avoid inconsistencies. Otherwise, I have made every effort to collect and present the data accurately. The questionnaire is designed to elicit objective information, and relies as little as possible on my own subjective impressions. The feelings and opinions of those involved cannot, at this distance, be adequately ascertained; although I have been able to use extracts from letters to illustrate particular points, I have tried to avoid inferring emotions which may not, at the time, have been felt. Where questions have been difficult to resolve I have attempted to err on the side of understatement: thus for instance, children who were sacked from their jobs or left placements on account of disruptive behaviour have

only been marked as such if the records furnish positive proof: where there is only a strong suspicion, the outcome has been categorised as 'not known'. However, my own attempts to avoid bias cannot overcome the limitations of the data discussed above. The reader should be aware that, strictly speaking, what follows is an interpretation of the records of children admitted into the care of the Waifs and Strays Society: the extent to which these reflect the reality of each child's experience must, in the final analysis, be left to conjecture.

CHAPTER TWO: THE LEGAL BACKGROUND TO SEPARATION

In the 1880s legislation was introduced through which natural parents could permanently forfeit the custody of their children to third parties. The Prevention of Cruelty to and Protection of Children Act 1889 was introduced to separate children from parents who were considered unfit; the Poor Law Amendment Act 1889, the Custody of Children Act 1891 and the Industrial Schools Act 1891 prevented certain children who had already been cared for by the state or the voluntary societies from returning to their parents. The legislation formed the basis for a number of procedures which were used to regulate the relationship between natural parents, children and child care organisations for the next century. Place of Safety Orders derived from Section 6 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act 1889; the grounds for making Care Orders were to be found both in this Act and in the Industrial Schools Acts of 1857 to 1881; provisions by which a local authority could, by administrative fiat, assume parental rights and responsibilities over a child in its care (Section 3 of the Child Care Act 1980) were laid down in the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1889. The Custody of Children Act 1891, though gradually superseded by other legislation, remained on the statute book, and was cited as recently as 1973. The Industrial Schools Act 1891 survived as Section 24 of the Child Care Act 1980. These provisions will all be repealed or altered by the implementation of the 1989 Children Act ; nevertheless, they created a legal framework for child care policy in this country which endured for a hundred years (1). The children in the study

sample all came into the Society's care as this legislation was being drawn up: they were among its original subjects, for the Acts were introduced in order to address problems raised by situations identical to their own. Thus an analysis of the debate which led to the legislation sets the children's experiences within the context of their time.

The Acts cited above could not have become law without a considerable shift in the concept of parental rights. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, on the one hand the natural father was assumed to have an inalienable and virtually absolute right to the custody of his legitimate children; on the other hand, an illegitimate child was filius nullius, and the unmarried mother's right to custody was a matter of some dispute. Third parties, such as interested relatives and child care organisations, had no right to custody. This chapter will attempt to examine the ways in which changes in the concept of parental rights altered during the nineteenth century so that, by the 1880s, the introduction of these Acts was seen as both necessary and feasible.

The Father's Right to the Custody of Legitimate Children

In 1765 Blackstone, in his Commentaries on the Laws of England described the father of legitimate children as being bound by three duties: those of maintenance, protection and education. In order to enable him to perform these duties, and also as 'a recompense for his care and trouble in the faithful discharge of [them]' the father had been given considerable powers or rights over his children. These rights were not as absolute as the Roman father's power of life and death over his

children, but they were still 'sufficient to keep the child in order and obedience'. They included the right of lawful punishment; the right to refuse consent to the marriage of a child under age; the right to the child's earnings while dependent upon him, and the power over the child's person: that is, the right to custody. The mother, on the other hand, was 'entitled to no power, but only to reverence and respect' (2).

Blackstone makes it clear that the father's rights were not of divine origin, but were dependent upon his fulfilling his duty towards the child: 'the power of parents over their children is derived from the former consideration, their duty' (3).

This point was reiterated by later commentators (4) and it seems likely that, because the relationship was seen as a contract which might be broken by an abuse of trust, it initially became possible to introduce the argument that some fathers, by their behaviour, had forfeited their rights - particularly the right to custody.

Manchester claims that 'by and large the law enforced parental powers rather more effectively than it enforced parental duties' (5). Nevertheless, any father who completely neglected any of the duties that Blackstone enumerated ran the risk of losing custody: thus the father in Blisset's case (1774), who had refused to maintain his child (6); the father in R.v.Dobbyn (1817), who was thought to be a danger to the physical safety of his daughter (7); and the father in Lyons v. Blenkin (1821), who had allowed his children to be brought up and educated by their maternal relations (8), all lost custody. A decision of the Lord Chancellor, in a case that must have been almost contemporaneous with

Blackstone, makes it clear why the concept of a contract was upheld by law:

the paternal authority as to its civil force was founded in nature, and the care presumed which he would take for the education of the child; but if he would not provide for its support, he abandoned his right to the custody of the child's person, or if he would educate it in a manner forbidden by the laws of the state, the public right of the community to superintend the education of its members, and disallow what for its own security and welfare it should see good to disallow, went beyond the right and authority of the father: "nullum ius privatum juri publico potest derogare" (9)

Blackstone has very little to say about the duty to protect except that parents had such a strong natural instinct to protect their children that they needed to be restrained rather than encouraged (10). However, one of the major grounds for depriving a father of custody both at habeas corpus and through wardship proceedings was that of gross illtreatment (see below). It is possible that fathers lost custody relatively easily on these grounds because they were considered to have failed utterly in their duty to protect their children.

Under the Poor Laws, statutory provisions had been introduced to ensure that the other two parental duties - of maintenance and education - were enforced, at least to a minimal degree. Thus fathers who allowed their children to become dependent on the state through their refusal to maintain them might be prosecuted under 43 Elizabeth c. 2 and the statutes which followed.

Inevitably poor fathers who failed to maintain their children ran a far greater risk of prosecution than the rich, if only because poor children were much more likely to become dependent upon the state. If one

considers the duty of education, this division between rich and poor as regards enforcement becomes quite explicit. Blackstone states that:

Our laws, though their defects in this particular cannot be denied, have in one instance made a wise provision for breeding up the rising generation: since the poor and laborious part of the community, when past the age of nurture, are taken out of the hands of their parents, by the statutes for apprenticing poor children, and are placed out by the public in such a manner as may render their abilities, in their several situations, of the greatest advantage to the commonwealth (11).

Thus under the Poor Law Acts of 1597 and 1601, poor parents who were unable, or even thought to be unable, to fulfill their obligation to educate their children sufficiently to enter the labour market, forfeited their right to custody (12).

On the other hand: 'the rich, indeed, are left at their own option whether they will bring up their children to be ornaments or disgraces to their family' (13). This assertion of Blackstone's is only partly true, for although the rich were not constrained under the Poor Laws to educate their children, nevertheless they, too, were bound by the dictum that 'nullum ius privatum juri publico potest derogare'. This appears to have been the principle behind the judgments in some of the earliest wardship cases.

Early Proceedings in Chancery: Shelley's and Wellesley's Cases

One of the first fathers whose right to custody was questioned by the application of this principle was the poet, Shelley. In 1814 he left his wife, Harriet Westbrook, and went to live with Mary Godwin, by whom he had two illegitimate children. Harriet returned to her father's house

with her daughter, Ianthe, and a few months later gave birth to Shelley's son and heir, Charles. In 1816 Harriet died; Shelley immediately married Mary Godwin and asked Harriet's father to return the children to his care. Instead of doing this, Mr Westbrooke applied for the children to be made wards of Chancery, settling £2,000 on them to enable the court to proceed. He petitioned the court in their name to appoint himself their guardian. Shelley contested the case but lost; first Harriet's relations, and then, on Shelley's false allegations that his in-laws were illiterate and kept a low coffee-house, a Dr and Mrs Hulme were appointed impartial guardians. Harriet's biographer claims that they were chosen because they could be relied on to follow a regime designed to turn the children into 'conventional little conservatives' (14).

Shelley's son, Charles, was heir to a baronetcy and a safe seat in Parliament. His father was a professed atheist who had publicly attacked the established church (15) and the sanctity of matrimony (16). Lord Eldon made it clear that he was depriving Shelley of the custody of his children because of the damaging effect his opinions might have on the community as a whole:

I consider this, therefore, as a case in which the father has demonstrated that he must, and does deem it to be matter of duty which his principles impose upon him to recommend to those whose opinions and habits he may take upon himself to form, that conduct in some of the most important relations of life, as moral and virtuous, which the law calls upon me to consider as immoral and vicious _ conduct which the law animadverts upon as inconsistent with the duties of persons in such relations of life, and which it considers as injuriously affecting both the interests of such persons and those of the community.

I cannot, therefore think that I should be justified in delivering over these children for their education exclusively, to what is called the care to which Mr Shelley

wishes it to be intrusted (17).

Shelley's case was heard in camera and appears to have avoided excessive publicity (18). Ten years later, in a much more famous case, Mr Long Wellesley, who had brought his children up to consort with criminals, lost custody on similar grounds. The Lord Chancellor accepted the argument that:

Mr Wellesley...considered it the principal branch of his children's education, that they should know how, if necessary, to make themselves perfect blackguards; it being his wish that they should be qualified to enter into and associate with the lowest and most vulgar society,... and if the sole and uncontrolled management of their education be left to, and entrusted with their father, they will be trained up in a course of conduct, and with feelings and sentiments, which must inevitably destroy their moral and civil characters, and render them unfit for the society to which their birth and station in life entitles them (19).

In this case the counsel appearing for the infants had pointed out the reason why it was particularly important to restrain the influence of a rich father:

The infant plaintiffs are designed to fill important situations in society; in the right formation of their character is involved the welfare of many others besides themselves; and there is, therefore, a more urgent call upon the court to save them from early contamination, than if they were less eminent in rank and fortune (20).

Thus where there was a question of the state interfering in the relationship between parent and child, the ultimate consideration appears to have been the damage to society caused by parents who had broken their supposed contract. For the poor, the main aim appears to have been the enforcement of parental duties through the Poor Laws, with the ultimate sanction of separation in the workhouse or through apprenticeship for

those families who were unable to cope without state support. For the rich, the aim appears to have been some curtailment of parental power, so that a father's anti-social influence might not be allowed to spread: and it appears to have been assumed that a rich man, from his position of power, could do far greater damage to society than a pauper.

Habeas Corpus and Wardship Proceedings: the Earliest Transfers of Custody

Poor fathers who had broken their contract might be separated from their children if the whole family were admitted to the workhouse; their neglected children were also far more likely to come into conflict with the criminal law, and thus be separated from them through imprisonment or even transportation, than were the children of the rich. Nevertheless, until the 1880s, a poor father could not lose custody of his children unless they had committed a felony. They might be removed from his care for a period, but at the end of their term of imprisonment, or after the family were discharged from the workhouse, he could not be prevented from reclaiming them. Initially it was only through the workings of the Court of Chancery, or through habeas corpus actions in the High Courts, that a father might be deprived of his rights - and these courts were only open to the rich.

Both the Shelley and Wellesley cases were actions in the Court of Chancery, and they both demonstrate many of the features of these early disputes. In a society where wives were still very dependent on their husbands, and children, by their nature, were unlikely to complain, allegations that a father was abusing his power were rare. Moreover,

traditionally, public law did not impinge upon family relations; the maxim that 'an Englishman's home is to him as his castle and fortress' had been reiterated at the beginning of the century by a legal judgment that: 'each house is a domain into which the King's writ does not seek to run, and to which his officers do not seek to be admitted' (21).

Initially it was only when the family relationships themselves broke down, through death or, on rarer occasions, through the separation of the parents, that questions of custody were likely to arise. In both the Shelley and the Wellesley cases, the mothers had died, and the fathers urged their rights to custody against their in-laws. In these two cases the parents had reached some sort of agreement during the wife's lifetime, and it was her death which precipitated the father's pressing of his right. In other cases an action might be brought when parents separated and the wife discovered that she had no right to custody or even access to her children against her husband (22).

Those relations who were concerned to question a father's right to custody had two courses of action open to them: they could sue for a writ of habeas corpus in the High Court or Chancery, or they could petition Chancery to make the child a ward of court, with themselves as guardians - the action taken in the Shelley and Wellesley cases.

Those cases involving habeas corpus proceedings demonstrate the extreme power given to the father in the early part of the century. At habeas corpus, the courts had simply to decide if the child were being unlawfully detained. If the child was actually in the possession of the father, and the mother or her relations were trying to reclaim it, the

courts would virtually never act, for they took the view that 'where the legal custody is, no restraint exists'(23), and considerations regarding the welfare of the child or of society in general were usually irrelevant. Thus in 1804 in the case of R.v.de Manneville, the Court of King's Bench refused to issue a writ ordering a father to hand over a baby to its mother, even though it had not yet been weaned (24).

Relatives were marginally more likely to succeed if they gained possession of the child first, and then withstood any writ of habeas corpus issued by the father. Until the 1850s 'the contract of marriage was not to be dissolved unless that is absolutely necessary for the safety of one of the parties'(25). It appears that at common law this same principle was followed regarding the custody of children. Thus in R. v Dobbyn (1817), where the father was very dissolute and had seriously ill-treated his wife, she claimed that not only her life, but also that of the child were at risk if they remained with the father, and she was not ordered to return their six year old daughter to his custody (26).

A judge would only refuse to return a child to its father on the ground of his cruelty or personal ill-usage of the child (27); except in these extreme cases where the father appeared to have so far failed in his duty to protect his children as to have become a threat to their physical safety, until 1873 the common law courts always judged habeas corpus cases on a question of rights, and the overriding right was always the father's.

A far more effective course of action by which a father's right of custody might be challenged was through wardship proceedings in the Court

of Chancery. Although in habeas corpus cases the Court of Chancery followed common law rules, where the child was made a ward of court the rules of equity prevailed. The Lord Chancellor, or Master of Rolls, sitting in Chancery, possessed an authority delegated by the monarch who, as parens patriae, stood as protector of all his defenceless subjects, including infants. This authority superseded that of the father. Thus in equity cases the court was free to consider the interests of the child as well as (not initially instead of) the rights of the father. A father who lost rights over his children might well refuse to fulfill his duty to maintain them: in *Agar-Ellis v. Lascelles* (1883) the counsel threatened that:

If Mr Agar-Ellis is not allowed to bring up his children in the way that he deems best, he desires to intimate most respectfully to the court that he will consider himself discharged from all legal and moral obligations to maintain his daughters (28).

Thus Chancery would only act on behalf of children who had sufficient property to be used for their maintenance if a decision were made. This is why Shelley's father-in-law settled £2,000 on his grandchildren before applying for them to be made wards of court. Chancery 'could not take on itself the maintenance of all the children in the kingdom' (29) and, therefore, was in fact, though not in theory, open only to the rich.

Conceptually even the Court of Chancery could not deprive a father of his right to custody; instead it could make it impossible for him to exercise his right, by appointing another guardian to the child, and then restraining him from interfering (30). This may seem merely a legalistic quibble, but it reveals the fundamental strength of the father's position

- a point which is of considerable importance.

The Welfare Principle in the Court of Chancery

As the Giffard , Shelley and Wellesley cases show, under the principle of parens patriae Chancery initially would only interfere with a father's right to custody if his influence was seen to be detrimental to the welfare of society. Gradually the focus seems to have shifted from the consideration of the good of society to that of the welfare of the individual child. As at common law, Chancery appears to have held a tradition that fathers should be restrained from grossly ill-treating or ill-using their children (31). It is possibly this tradition which enabled the court to begin to consider the child's individual welfare as a separate entity and no longer identical with the welfare of society as a whole.

Considerations of the child's welfare as an individual appear to have been introduced in about the 1840s. It is mentioned as a factor in decisions made under the Custody of Infants Act 1839, while the earliest Chancery judgment in which it appears to have been laid out is that of Sir J.L.Knight Bruce in 1848:

[the court] must be satisfied that the father has so conducted himself, (or has shown himself to be a person of such a description, or is placed in such a position), as to render it not merely better for the children, but essential to their safety or to their welfare , in some very serious or important respect, that his rights should be treated as lost or suspended (32).

The concept of the 'welfare principle' appears to have developed and gained ground throughout the latter part of the century, as can be seen if

one compares the above judgment with remarks made by Lindley L.J. in 1892:

The dominant matter for the consideration of the court is the welfare of the child. But the welfare of the child is not to be measured by money only, nor by physical comfort only. The word welfare must be taken in its widest sense. The moral and religious welfare of the child must be considered as well as its physical well-being. Nor can the ties of affection be disregarded (33).

As Seymour Thompson pointed out in 1886, there is clearly a similar progression between the two Custody of Infants Acts of 1839 and 1873, whose operations were also confined to the Court of Chancery:

The essential difference between the two statutes appears to have been this: under Serjeant Talfourd's Act, the three things which were to be kept in mind by the court in determining the question of the infant's custody ranked in the following order: 1. the parental right ; 2. the marital duty; 3. the interest of the child... But under the Infant's Custody Act [1873] the "benefit of the infant or infants is the paramount consideration" (34).

As the welfare of the child became an increasingly important consideration in wardship proceedings, the Court of Chancery was able to clarify further grounds under which a parent might be considered unfit. As I have already mentioned, danger to the child's safety or the welfare of society came first. Then, in 1848 and 1849 two fathers lost custody because of their profligate habits: one was in prison for debt (35), the other living in open adultery (36). In 1851, suspected unnatural (homosexual) offences were added as a ground (37), and in 1865, sexual assault on a daughter (38).

In 1868 a case occurred in which the father lost custody not on the grounds of his unfitness as a parent, but because he had allowed his children to be brought up by his deceased wife's relations in a manner which would be beyond his own means, and to return the children to him

would reduce their prospects for the future (39). The father in Lyons v. Blenkin lost custody partly because he had delegated his duty to educate his children (see above), but also because it was seen to be detrimental to their interests to return to him, regardless of his suitability as a parent. Perhaps this case can be taken to mark the point at which the interests of the child became at least as weighty a consideration at law as that of the paternal right. The 'welfare of the child', of course, remains the major consideration in wardship cases today.

It was well recognised that Chancery had far greater discretion in custody disputes than the Common Law Courts. In Lyons v. Blenkin, the Lord Chancellor had advised the defendant of a habeas corpus proceeding to petition Chancery in order that the case might be heard under the more flexible equity rules (40); similarly, in at least two wardship cases the Lord Chancellor felt it necessary to restrain the father who had been deprived of custody from suing out a writ of habeas corpus in the High Court, in order to overturn his ruling (41).

In 1873 the Judicature Act was passed. Section 25, subsection 10 made it clear that: 'In questions relating to the custody and education of infants, the rules of equity shall prevail.' (42).

Prior to the Judicature Act the welfare principle appears only to have applied at private law to disputes between relations - not, I think, because third parties were theoretically unable to institute wardship proceedings in Chancery (43), but because the practical difficulties, particularly the expenses, were too great to justify it. After the passing of this Act the lower courts were also able to adopt the principle

that the rights of parents were subordinate to those of the child, and third parties could then successfully argue at habeas corpus that their claim on a child might be more beneficial than that of his family. The leading case regarding the effect of the Judicature Act on habeas corpus cases appears to be R. v. Gynghall (1893), in which a mother lost her claim to remove her fifteen year old daughter from a Protestant convalescent home at Weymouth in order to send her to a Roman Catholic home at Brighton. Kay L.J. stated that:

The counsel for the mother sought to limit the jurisdiction of the court by citing certain cases in which, before the Judicature Act, application was made for a writ of habeas corpus. I deny the applicability of these decisions as authorities for cases which arise after the passing of the Judicature Act ... where, as here, the application is by way of habeas corpus, the real object being to determine who is to have the custody of children, the rules of equity must prevail. The Court is not since the Act in the difficulty in which Courts of Common Law formerly were when such an application was made to them. (44).

The Rights of Married Women

Therefore various moves made in Chancery tended to limit the concept of a father's inalienable, untransferable right to the custody of his children. In family disputes, then as now, the principal challenge to the father's right to custody came from the mother.

At the beginning of the century Blackstone's dictum that 'a mother as such is entitled to no power, but only to reverence and respect' still held good. Married women were viewed by the law in much the same light as children. A husband not only held the right to his wife's property, including earnings. He was also popularly supposed to hold the right to

use moderate chastisement in order to control her. Until the judgment in *R. v. Jackson* in 1891, he was entitled to her custody (45); as with his children, he could initially only be deprived of this right if he had so far failed in his duty to protect as to be a danger to her safety (46).

If mothers were legally in a similar position to their children, it is hardly surprising that they had no rights over them. A mother was not her children's legal guardian either during the father's lifetime or even after his death, when, by his will, he could appoint a testamentary guardian to supersede her. A mother who separated from her husband could find that she had no claim to custody, or even access, to her children. So entrenched was the father's position that the Ecclesiastical Courts which, before the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857, could grant a divorce a mensa et thoro, never concerned themselves with the custody of children, assuming that they would automatically remain with their father.

It was argued that married women, far from being oppressed by laws which treated them like children, enjoyed complete protection from the harsh realities of life to be faced by men (47). One of the greatest threats to the established system was seen to be that posed by married women of independent means, who did not need their husbands to maintain or protect them. Unmarried women were expected to live under the protection (and control) of their fathers; married women lived under the protection of their husbands. If a married woman had sufficient means and courage to leave her husband she was in an anomalous position: from one point of view deprived of protection and 'the mark and prey of seducers and adulterers', from another point of view enjoying a dangerously independent adult

existence. An errant wife might be brought back through an action for restitution of conjugal rights in the Ecclesiastical Court, but it was far more effective to prevent her from leaving by threatening to deny her future access to her children. If she did leave, it was then also possible to condemn her for deliberately and permanently deserting them.

In 1837 Lady Caroline Norton left her husband, who retaliated by removing their children from her reach. It was partly due to pressure from her that in 1838 a bill 'to amend the Law relating to the Custody of Infants' was introduced to Parliament by Serjeant Talfourd. This bill narrowly failed, but it led to the publication of an anonymous pamphlet: A Brief Exposure of the most immoral and dangerous tendency of a bill affecting the rights of parents now under the consideration of Parliament; or a summary of the reasons why this bill, entitled 'Custody of Infants Bill' should not be allowed to become the law of the land. Most of the arguments detailed above come from this pamphlet, which is hysterical in tone and clearly prejudiced. Nevertheless the same arguments were reiterated in Parliament the following year when Serjeant Talfourd introduced a similar bill which later became the Custody of Infants Act, 1839 (48).

The 1839 Act made provisions for the Court of Chancery to grant to mothers access to all children who were in the sole custody of their fathers or legal guardians, and complete custody of any who were under seven. Two additional clauses in the original bill, allowing mothers to apply for custody in cases of divorce, and access where the children were kept by the father under a writ of habeas corpus, were thrown out at the

committee stage. The Lord Chancellor argued that: 'all the beneficial purposes which the present measure was intended to effect might....be secured by extending the power of that jurisdiction with which alone the control over matters of this kind rested' (49).

The effect of the Act, by confining its operations to the Court of Chancery, strengthened that court's power over children, and possibly helped to develop the policies described above. I have earlier described how the 'welfare principle' began to emerge at about this time: one reason why mothers were permitted to apply for custody of their children under seven was because it was seen to be in the interests of most children of this age to live with them (50). Thus the Act can be seen at least as much as a landmark in the development of the 'welfare principle' as it is part of the movement towards the emancipation of married women.

A second Custody of Infants Act in 1873 increased the age of children to whom mothers could apply for custody to sixteen. It also made it possible for the first time for a husband to make a valid agreement to hand over the children to his wife in a separation deed - though this could be rescinded if not 'for the benefit of the infant or infants to give effect thereto' (51).

The original Custody of Infants Act contained one particular clause that was dropped by 1873:

no order shall be made by virtue of this Act, whereby any Mother, against whom adultery shall be established by judgment in an action for criminal conversation at the suit of her husband, or by the sentence of an Ecclesiastical Court, shall have the custody of any Infant or access to any Infant, anything herein contained to the contrary notwithstanding (52).

An adulterous woman might pass off another man's child as her husband's and thereby interfere both with the laws of property and legitimacy. It was this, together with the fact that they had broken the Seventh Commandment, which caused the extent of bitterness incurred by unfaithful wives. They were seen as totally brazen, unfit guardians of children: one reason why Wellesley lost custody of his children was not because of his own adultery but because of that of his mistress:

the system of adultery has been carried in a manner so disgraceful to Mrs Bligh, that I do declare, that I ought to be hunted out of society if I hesitated for one moment to say, that I would sooner forfeit my life than permit the girl Victoria to go into the company of such a woman, or into the care and protection of a man who had the slightest connection with that woman (53).

The fact that adultery had been seen as proof of unfitness in a mother is behind some of the policies of the voluntary societies towards parents who were suspected of cohabiting illicitly.

Through the Custody of Infants Acts mothers gained some rights, but these could only be acquired through contesting a father's claim and were not conferred automatically. Mothers were not recognised as natural guardians of their children until the Guardianship of Infants Act, 1886. This Act, rather than the Custody Acts, marks the point where mothers were finally regarded as having an independent legal existence, with rights and responsibilities of their own. It is not coincidental that this Act was passed after the Married Women's Property Act of 1870, which gave women legal rights to their own earnings. By 1886 women were taking part in public life, especially as members of school boards or guardians of the poor. They could no longer be ignored as appendages of

their husbands, with no more rights than their children. The Guardianship of Infants Act, 1886, gave women a legal right to their own children, by entitling them to remain as natural guardians after their husband's deaths, at least on an equal footing with any testamentary guardians appointed by the husband's will. Widows also acquired the right themselves to appoint testamentary guardians (54). Husband and wife did not, however, acquire an equal right to the guardianship of their children until 1925 (55).

Thus at private law the position of the father was gradually being challenged, at the end of the century by the emergence of the mother as possessing a separate legal identity, and throughout the period by the development of the concept that the interests of the child should be the primary consideration. While at private law the assumption was that a father would be determined to retain custody of his children at all costs, at public law, the opposite assumption was made, and he was believed to be only too eager to relinquish them. The explanation of this paradox is entirely financial: the rich had everything invested in their children because they were their heirs; the poor simply did not earn enough money to support them. The early jurisdiction over controversies concerning the custody of children was confined almost exclusively to Chancery, and the expense of bringing an action was prohibitive to all but the wealthy. On the other hand, public law was initially only concerned with the custody of children through the incidental provisions of the Poor Law, and inevitably those who were affected were the poor. This of course is a

situation which , broadly speaking, has persisted : middle class children are still more likely to be made wards of court in situations in which poor children come into care.

Custody Disputes and Public Law

Outside the Poor Law, public law initially did not intervene in controversies concerning the custody of children, not only because an Englishman's home was considered sacrosanct, but also because of the fear that any intervention from the state would discourage individual effort and encourage dependence. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century an unskilled workman earned fifteen to twenty shillings per week when in full-time work, and many were only employed casually. The Waifs and Strays Society considered that the minimum sum necessary to support a foster child was about five shillings per week - Dr Stephenson's Home considered this too little. Thus at the most generous estimate, twenty shillings was only just enough to pay for food and clothing for four people - and this does not take into account rent, fares, or any other extra expenses. Any such family with more than two children was therefore living at below subsistence level - even when the father was in full-time work. In the circumstances it is hardly surprising that fears that, among the poor, some fathers would be only too eager to relinquish custody of their children, had some justification.

The children of the labouring poor were particularly visible during the middle years of the nineteenth century, and increasingly, the conditions under which they lived became a cause for public concern. By the late

1830s the Factory Acts and, to a greater extent the changes in technology, had reduced their chances of finding employment; yet compulsory schooling was not introduced effectively until 1876. For about forty years, therefore, there were large numbers of children in the major cities who had no supervision or employment during the daytime, and whose ubiquitous presence it was difficult for those in authority to ignore. In 1853 there were believed to be about three thousand children hawking, sweeping crossings, or openly begging in London alone; in 1876 there may have been ten times that number (56). Concern at their obvious neglect, and the threat of their probable delinquency, gave rise to the industrial school movement in the 1850s and 1860s, and the foundation of the major voluntary societies.

This is also the period described by Dicey as the time when the doctrine of laissez-faire gave way to collectivist policies, partly as a result of the extension of the franchise (57). Collectivist legislation tended to diminish a father's right by increasing state control over his actions: the Factory Acts prevented him from allowing his child to work excessively long hours: the Vaccination Act of 1853 forced him to have some regard for his children's health, and the Education Acts of 1870 and 1876 gave statutory force to his common law duty to educate his child. Thus, during this period, the notion that the state might have some responsibility for the care of destitute children gained gradual acceptance (58).

One area has always been exempt from the individualist doctrine. Where children had broken the criminal law the state abrogated the father's role

by removing them from his control through imprisonment and, until 1853, transportation. There is some evidence to suggest that some fathers did indeed make use of the criminal law to relinquish custody of their unwanted children. In 1847 Sergeant Adams pointed out to the House of Lords Select Committee on Juvenile Offenders and Transportation that: 'the moment a child is convicted of theft he ceases to be a burden to his parent,' for parents were not required to pay maintenance towards children in prison. Adams went on to provide examples of children whose parents had prosecuted them for stealing from themselves. The amounts stolen are minimal - for instance B.J. at the age of eleven, had been charged with stealing a handkerchief from his father, whose motive is obvious (59).

In criminal cases a father's right to custody might be superseded, as in the early Chancery cases, by the need to protect society from undesirable elements: clearly this need was held to be superior to that of enforcing parental responsibilities.

In 1840 an attempt was made to extend this power of the criminal law. Under 'An Act for the Care and Education of Infants who may be convicted of Felony', the Court of Chancery was given the power to transfer the guardianship of infant felons under the age of twenty-one from their fathers to third parties.

The purpose of the Act was:

to remove children from the influence of vicious parents. Hitherto the law had been directly opposed to the benevolent views of those individuals and societies who had exerted themselves to save children from further perversion, and the object of this Bill was to place a discretionary power in the Lord Chancellor for the purpose of facilitating their efforts (60).

Although this Act gave statutory backing to individual efforts to sever children from vicious parents, it did not increase the state's activities in this field: the children were not to be placed under the guardianship of the Poor Law or the prison authorities, but under the voluntary societies which had set out to rescue them. Thus, by 1840, the state was prepared to interfere with the rights of parents of criminals, but not yet to assume responsibility for their children.

Although this Act should have been a landmark in the debate concerning the custody of children, it proved to be entirely unworkable. It received the royal assent in August 1840. By May 1841 not one child had been dealt with under its provisions (61) and it seems unlikely that it was ever widely used. The fit person orders which it envisaged were not fully accepted until after the passing of the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act, 1889.

In 1852, Captain Williams of the Philanthropic Society told a select committee that the Act had been rendered inoperative by a clause which prevented infants subject to its provisions from being sent overseas or outside the jurisdiction of the Court of Chancery (62). Like many of his contemporaries he thought that juvenile emigration was necessary to prevent delinquent boys from returning to their former companions (63), but he was one of the few contemporary commentators who did not lay the blame entirely on the parents. He thought that boys had no hope in England because the terrible conditions endured by the working classes in the 1850s reduced self-respect. When conditions ameliorated it would no longer be so important to send the children abroad to enable them to

escape (64).

Although the Custody of Infant Felons Act proved to be premature, by the 1850s it had become clear that some move to extend the influence of the state in the parent-child relationship was inevitable, particularly in the area over which it already had some control, that of criminal children. The major parliamentary enquiries into juvenile offenders and destitute children produced evidence both of the contaminating effect of placing juvenile delinquents in adult prisons, and of the close connection between delinquency and destitution. Voluntary social reformers were also involved in the debate; it was partly due to their influence - in particular that of Mary Carpenter - that in 1857 the first Industrial Schools Act was introduced.

Industrial Schools Acts

The Industrial Schools Acts of 1857-1881 served two main functions: they both removed children charged with minor offences from the penal system, and at the same time, they extended the authority of the state to assume custody of children who had not yet offended but were thought likely to do so in the future : Mary Carpenter's 'perishing' classes.

The first Industrial Schools Act (1857) served both these purposes by removing vagrant children whose parents were unable to enter into recognizances for their future good behaviour, from the prison system to industrial schools: 'for such period as [the justices] may think necessary for their education and training' (66). Later Acts extended the category of suitable children to those who were found begging, destitute or

frequenting the company of reputed thieves, and children under twelve who had committed minor offences, (1861)(67), children in the sole care of their mothers - but not fathers - who had twice been convicted of crime (1871)(68), habitual truants (1876)(69), and children who lodged in brothels or frequented the company of prostitutes (1881)(70).

The earlier legislation seems to suggest that those children whose parents were failing to exercise sufficient authority over them were in need of industrial school training, and the various provisions may well be taken as laying down grounds under which children might be deemed 'beyond control'. The Industrial Schools Act of 1861 contained a further section whereby parents might even apply for an unruly child to be voluntarily admitted to an industrial school (71). From the 1870s onwards the Acts gave additional attention to the question of parental fitness, and the 1880 Act actually begins:

Whereas it is expedient that children who are growing up in the society of depraved and disorderly persons should be withdrawn from contaminating influences, and that the benefits of industrial school training should be extended to them...(72)

There appears to be some parallel with the changes in the Chancery rulings noted above: again the question of whether the child might become a danger to society appears to have given way to the question of whether the parent might be a danger to the individual child. The grounds under which children might be separated from their parents through industrial school orders are very similar to those under which Chancery decided to make a child a ward of court and appoint an alternative guardian.

The major area covered by Chancery rulings but not the Industrial

Schools Acts appears to have been cruelty. Children who were cruelly treated were neither so visible nor such an obvious threat to society as those who were teetering on the brink of delinquency; moreover cruelty was particularly difficult to define, as a parent was seen to have the right to use a degree of physical violence towards his child as part of his right to chastise. Rich relatives who were concerned at a parent's violence might institute proceedings in Chancery or sue out a writ of habeas corpus, but the poorer children had no protection except for the threat of criminal proceedings if they were seriously injured or killed.

The NSPCC was founded in 1883 to champion children who suffered from brutal treatment at the hands of adults. They immediately discovered that there were no statutory provisions by which these children could be removed from abusive parents or even permanently separated from those who had been charged with offences against them. There were cases where magistrates made arrangements by which parents agreed to renounce their rights in exchange for more lenient sentences (73) but these clearly were not valid agreements. The NSPCC lobbied for an Act to give the courts powers to reduce a parent's rights in cases of cruelty. There were precedents in Chancery and in the High Courts (see above), and in 1889 the Prevention of Cruelty to and Protection of Children Act (74) was passed, enabling third parties to remove abused children from the custody of parents to a place of safety (s.6), and making provisions for a transfer of guardianship to a 'fit person' where parents had been found guilty of serious ill-treatment and neglect (s.5). Some of the children who were placed under the guardianship of the Secretary of the NSPCC were

accommodated in industrial schools.

The Report of the Royal Commission on Reformatories and Industrial Schools of 1884 (75), contains some evidence to suggest that, as had been feared, the Industrial Schools Acts were sometimes used to relieve parents of their unwanted responsibilities. Section 9.4 of the 1861 Act, which allowed for voluntary admissions was widely condemned, and the commissioners recommended that it should be repealed (76).

The number of children committed to industrial schools rose alarmingly, from 1,668 in 1864 to 17,614 in 1882. Unfortunately the schools appear to have been fairly popular with parents, at least in comparison with reformatories. Mr Duffus of the Aberdeen Parochial Board, told the commissioners that in Scotland they were:

alarmed at the facility with which parents divest themselves of their children and get them into schools, not regarding this as any disgrace, but talking of the school as "a seminary that their children have been fortunate enough to get into." And, indeed, on the evenings of the annual social meeting they take their acquaintances there to point out with satisfaction their children (77).

The commissioners concluded that:

There is ample testimony to the fact that the power of committing children to industrial schools has been largely abused, often from benevolent motives, sometimes because of the facilities afforded by the law to parents to get rid of the burden of their children's support and education (78)

Given the conditions in which most poor children lived, the problem may well have been not that many parents were loath to accept their responsibilities, but that too many poor children came under the provisions of the Acts. Annie S. was eight when an application was made for her admission to the Waifs and Strays. She came from a home where the

children were always begging and pilfering, and her father was living with a woman who had been in prison for theft. In reply to the suggestion that Annie would be eligible for committal to an industrial school, the woman who referred her case wrote: 'In answer to your letter I can only say....that the Grimsby magistrates will not commit these cases to industrial schools. There are so many in the same circumstances.' (79)

Parental Rights and the Voluntary Societies

Although the industrial schools legislation and the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act both show an increased willingness on the part of the state to abrogate the powers of parents who were seen to have failed in their duties towards their children, the practical application of the Acts was left almost entirely in the hands of private voluntary bodies. The 'fit person' to whose guardianship abused children might be committed was usually Benjamin Waugh, Secretary of the NSPCC. Industrial schools were certified by the Home Office and supported by a per capita grant from the Treasury, but they were almost invariably founded and managed by the voluntary societies. At a fundamental level, the policies of the voluntary organisations were directly opposed to those of the state: for whereas the latter was concerned to enforce parental responsibilities, the former were primarily concerned with the rescue of children.

All the big voluntary societies were inspired by the evangelical movement and motivated by Christ's teaching to 'suffer little children to come unto me'. The more evangelical the foundation, the more concerned were the managers to save the souls of the children in their care. The

obvious degradation of some parents came to be regarded as characteristic of them all, so that the children's families were generally assumed to be evil influences from which they urgently needed to be separated for the sake of their salvation. The fullest expression of this argument can be found in Barnardo's pamphlet: 'The King's Business Requireth Haste.' (80). The philanthropists who led the societies tended to see the reunion of a child with his parents as literally the pathway to damnation; they thus regularly tried to sever the relationship. By leaving the management of industrial schools almost entirely to the voluntary societies the state ensured that policies which tended to separate children and parents would have greater weight than those which encouraged them to retain their responsibilities and resume custody. The ground was inadvertently prepared for subsequent legislation which curtailed parental responsibilities still further.

The Industrial Schools Acts expressly did not cover children who had committed felony. Presumably in theory these could still be placed under alternative guardianship through the Custody of Infant Felons Act 1839, though it is doubtful whether this provision was ever used. The Industrial Schools Acts did not provide for any such complete transfer of powers: a committal order only conferred on the managers custody and control of the child's person until a specified date. As with children subject to writs of habeas corpus, when industrial school children reached sixteen they were entitled to 'go where they pleased'. Unfortunately from the societies' point of view, many of the children 'pleased' to return to the parents who were seen to bar them from both

earthly and heavenly salvation.

There were many complaints as to the viciousness of these parents. They were alleged to ignore their children for the duration of the committal order and then, when the child was ready for discharge, to reappear, waiting to sell his clothes or live off his earnings. The Earl of Meath alleged in the House of Lords that:

As a matter of fact, the great majority of parents who claim their children in these cases do not get them back for the purpose of putting them to work in the ordinary sense in which going to work is understood. They get them really for criminal purposes: the boys are claimed in order that they might be taught to steal, the girls for still more evil purposes (81).

It is quite evident from Rowntree's studies in the early twentieth century that parents needed their older children's earnings to help maintain the younger members of the family (82). Parents whose children had been committed to industrial school were forced to provide for their maintenance until they were sixteen instead of benefitting from their earnings from fourteen or younger. By the time the children left industrial school they were potentially able to provide substantial support for their families. Moreover traditionally, as Blackstone had pointed out (see above) , a father had a right to the earnings of his unmarried children. It is not surprising that industrial school children were reclaimed.

Many of the larger societies which ran industrial schools also provided homes for children who were not committed, but were received voluntarily, at the parent's request. For at least the Waifs and Strays Society, these children made up by far the greater proportion of admissions. It was

generally claimed that children in the Homes were better fed, clothed and educated than their contemporaries. They also had better opportunities for employment (84). It must have usually appeared materially disadvantageous to the children to return home, but the societies tended to argue that reunion with their parents would be positively disastrous. Almost all parents, not simply those whose influence had been proved in court to be malicious, tended to be seen as undesirable elements from whom the children needed to be protected.

Parker points out that industrial schools had a vested interest in preventing the discharge of their older children because they were the most productive workers. They did not realise the irony of their fears that the children upon whom they themselves relied economically might be exploited if they returned to their parents (85). It seems probable that the voluntary rescue homes experienced similar organisational pressures to retain custody of their children: once the homes had been built they would have needed to be kept full in order to justify the appeals for subscriptions.

Children subject to committal orders could be separated from their parents until they had reached some sort of maturity. The societies had no rights of retention over other children, who had been admitted by voluntary agreement and who, theoretically, should have been returned home the moment their parents requested it. Yet so convinced were the societies of the superiority of their care that some of them appear to have had no compunction in resorting to methods which were often immoral and sometimes illegal in their attempts to keep children separated.

The three major societies, Barnardo's, the Waifs and Strays, and Dr Stephenson's Home, all required parents to sign admission forms which set out the contract they were alleged to be making. These contracts were always weighted in favour of the society: the parent had to agree to hand over care and control of the child for a period of years; the society might place the child anywhere in Britain, and (Barnardo's and Dr Stephenson's Home) the colonies; the parent could not reclaim the child within the (sometimes unspecified) period of the contract against the society's wishes, but if the child became unmanageable or disabled, or if the parent ceased to contribute towards his maintenance, the society could return him regardless of the parent's wishes. If the parent did succeed in reclaiming the child prematurely, he could be made liable to reimburse the society the whole sum expended on the child (twelve shillings a week in the case of Dr Stephenson's Home).

Semi-literate parents had to sign these legal-looking documents across a postage stamp, in front of witnesses. They were hardly likely to question their validity. Nor, if they earned less than a pound a week, were any but the most determined likely to test the clause agreeing to reimburse the society if the child were prematurely removed. Yet it had been established by the courts that a father could not relinquish the responsibilities for his children by voluntary agreement (86).

Admissions contracts were not the only spuriously legal documents used by the societies to further policies of severance. Between 1888 and 1900 Dr Stephenson's Home arranged 'adoptions' for 72 children in its care - and yet there was no Adoption Act in Britain until 1926. The Waifs and

Strays Society also occasionally arranged 'adoptions': Alice S.'s adoption contract is still extant. Drawn up by a solicitor, it was presumably presented to the parties concerned as being a valid and binding agreement to transfer rights and powers - and yet the same solicitor sent a covering note to the Society to explain that: 'you are no doubt aware that the law of England does not recognise adoption and that a guardian cannot in fact give up his powers though he may agree to do so.' (87)

The voluntary societies did not really need to resort to contracts of dubious legality in order to ensure a policy of severance. It was far simpler to place insuperable practical barriers in the way of parents who wished to reclaim their children. Modern research such as that by Aldgate and the Dartington Social Research Unit has proved that after children have been in care for longer than six months, parents become increasingly unlikely to reclaim them, particularly if they are given no encouragement to sustain the relationship (88). So, simply by discouraging regular contacts, it was possible for the voluntary societies to ensure that many children would not return to their homes.

Barnardo was particularly careful to ensure that children who were placed in foster homes were kept isolated from their parents, who were often not informed of the address. The Barnardo Boarding Out Regulations stated in 1896:

Clause 7: Correspondence between foster-parents and all relatives of boarded-out children is forbidden. All communications between children and their friends must pass through the office first of all, and no child should be allowed to receive a letter or parcel which does not bear the stamp of the institution.

Clause 8: No person claiming relationship or friendship with a child should be allowed to visit it unless he or she

produces written authority from the managers of the homes.
(89)

But even concealment was rarely a necessity at a time when communications were far less efficient than they are today. It was generally enough to place the child at a sufficient distance from the parent to make visiting difficult to ensure an end to the relationship. By far the greatest distances could be achieved through emigration. Parents who placed their children with Dr Stephenson's Home or Dr Barnardo's had to consent to emigration before admission could be agreed. The Waifs and Strays were clearly unhappy about such a policy - they tried to operate it sporadically in 1890, perhaps because they were short of funds, but after a short trial they contented themselves with indicating on the application form that: 'preference will be given to those cases in which consent to emigration is expressed'.

All the three major societies required the parents to sign a separate 'consent to emigration' form. The Waifs and Strays Society was quite scrupulous about this procedure (see Chapter 10 below). Barnardo, on the other hand, paid far less attention to parental wishes. Joy Parr found that in a sample of 160 girls who emigrated from Dr Barnardo's Homes during a similar period to that of the Waifs and Strays study, 41 went without their parents ever being notified, while a further 68 parents were only informed after the sailing date (90).

Paradoxically, the rescue societies had far greater control over children who were admitted voluntarily than over those who were committed on industrial school orders. A court made out a committal order to a specific school, usually within its own jurisdiction and therefore at no

great distance from the child's home; the school then received a Treasury grant for the child and was subject to annual Home Office inspection. Attempts by the managers to move children to inaccessible parts of the country or to emigrate them without consent would have been unlikely to pass unnoticed. Moreover industrial school orders were for a specific period: when a child was sixteen both he and his parents knew that he could be reclaimed. There were no such statutory regulations applying to voluntary children: the lack of constraints gave the voluntary societies virtually unlimited freedom to pursue severance policies. Controls over access and the distances at which such children might be placed from their parents were only introduced in 1983 (91).

Concern over the number of parents who insisted on reclaiming their children from industrial schools rather than allowing them to better themselves through emigration led to the recommendation in the 'Report of the Reformatories and Industrial Schools Commissioners 1884' that:

in cases where apprenticeship is inapplicable, equally full powers of disposing of the child [i.e. with only his own consent and not that of his parent] in some employment at home or at sea, or by arranging for its emigration should be given to the managers [of industrial schools]. We further recommend that, for enlistment in the army, the navy, or in the naval and military bands, boys should be received by the naval and military authorities from the managers of industrial schools, without requiring the parent's consent (92).

This recommendation gained statutory force as the Industrial Schools Amendment Act 1891. For industrial school children it legitimized the dubious practice which appears to have been widespread among voluntary societies of emigrating children or committing them to the armed forces, without requiring parental consent or even, necessarily, knowledge of

their departure.

It is necessary to find some explanation why, at a time when parental rights were beginning to seem less important than those of children, the voluntary societies operated policies which blatantly disregarded them. One cannot argue that they were ignorant of the law: in the 1880s nearly all the major societies commissioned pamphlets detailing the full complexity of the laws relating to children (93). Nevertheless they tended to regard the law as being a dispensible commodity where their work was concerned. Thus in 1889 the Law Quarterly Review commented on one of Barnardo's cases:

The advantage of being a philanthropist is that you can practically compel the Court of Appeal to spend its time in politely explaining elementary principles of law and morality which common persons are expected to take for granted (94).

Obviously the conviction that severance was necessary for the sake of the children's souls played some part in the policies of the voluntary societies, and one might perhaps argue that they were simply ahead of their time in making what they saw to be the ultimate spiritual welfare of their children their paramount consideration. I doubt if this is the whole picture. It seems more likely that the major reason why parental rights were so often wilfully disregarded was that the majority of parents were considered to possess only a very weak or non-existent claim to custody.

Very few of the parents who applied to have their children admitted to the societies were the fathers of legitimate children - the only parents who, at the time, were seen to possess any real rights over them.

According to the Waifs and Strays regulations of 1883, the only available fathers would have been either a moral or physical danger to their children or else so disabled as to be physically incapable of supporting them (95). Almost all of these would have been judged to be either morally or physically unfit to continue custody. The only 'fit' parents were widows and unmarried mothers; these formed by far the largest group of parents whose children came into the Society's care. Yet their claims were considered to possess little legal validity, and this is why they were so often ignored.

The Rights of Illegitimate Children and Unmarried Mothers

I have already discussed how weak were the rights of married women to the custody of their children: by the 1860s, when the societies began to flourish, they still had no right, even against their husbands, to the custody of children over seven. It would be another twenty years before widows gained any automatic rights to guardianship.

However it is the position of unmarried mothers which reveals the complex assumptions behind the severance policies. Some voluntary societies refused to admit illegitimate children on the grounds that they would thereby be encouraging immorality, and that their legitimate inmates would be contaminated by the contact (96). Dr Barnardo's, Dr Stephenson's Home and the Waifs and Strays Society did not subscribe to this policy, and all three admitted a considerable proportion of illegitimate children; nevertheless, the societies were not untouched by the prevailing attitudes towards them.

An illegitimate child was filius nullius, which meant that he had literally no legal relations. Dickens' Esther Summerson was brought up by a woman who was 'if there are any ties of blood in such a case', her aunt (97). Fifty-five years after Bleak House was written, the 1908 Children Act still described the relatives of an illegitimate child as 'the persons who would be so related if the child were legitimate' (98).

Not only were illegitimate children legally deprived of relations, there was also a strong chance that they would be forced to live apart from them. Although, throughout the century, a putative father could in theory be made liable to contribute to the support of his illegitimate child, in fact responsibility for maintenance almost invariably fell entirely on the mother (99). The major source of employment open to women was domestic service. Servants were expected to live in, and obviously could not bring their children with them. Apprentice dressmakers and shop assistants were also under the same constraints. Therefore most single women who needed employment had to make alternative arrangements for their children. There were no maternity benefits and so an unmarried mother had to find a placement for her child and return to work as soon as possible after the birth. There was no time to form a relationship with the child before it had to be handed over to foster parents - and at a time when an illegitimate birth disgraced a family to a degree which seems incomprehensible today, these may well have been strangers (100).

Thus the rights of unmarried mothers to the custody of their children were both legally weak, and practically extremely difficult to uphold. Somewhat unexpectedly, those mothers who could not cope and were forced to

apply for poor relief were likely to have a better chance of forming a relationship with the child, for the poor law officers would not, in principle, separate children who were within the years of nurture (that is, under seven) from their mothers (101). Those mothers who avoided the Poor Law by finding employment, were faced with a further problem: to overcome the accusation that they were encouraging immorality by taking in illegitimate children too easily, the voluntary societies tended to charge unmarried mothers a particularly high fee. The Waifs and Strays Society charged them a set rate of four shillings per week, far more than most other parents were expected to pay. After this had been paid, a domestic servant would sometimes be left with her board and lodging plus as little as two pounds a year for her personal needs. It is hardly surprising that many unmarried mothers, faced with what must have seemed a lifetime of impoverishment for the sake of a child they scarcely knew, abandoned them to the societies and disappeared.

Inevitably many girls were driven to avoid the miseries of unmarried parenthood by disposing of the baby. For centuries the fact that large numbers of illegitimate children were allowed to die appears to have been well-known, but a matter of no particular concern. The major baby farming scandals of 1870 and 1896 revealed an underground network by which unmarried mothers could effectively dispose of their unwanted children for a lump sum. Not only was there clearly a tacit understanding between the mother and the adopter that if the child died no questions would be asked, but also the transactions were conducted with such a degree of anonymity that all trace of the child's identity could easily be lost. The mother

would make contact with the foster mother by answering an advertisement with a poste restante address. The meeting would take place at a railway station so that neither party might discover where the other lived, and there would be no arrangements for future contact. Sometimes the baby farmer posed as the adoptive parent when receiving the child and then, posing as the mother, would hand the baby on to a third party. Therefore even a child who did survive had effectively no means of discovering his identity. He grew up as filius nullius with no relations and no claims. The Infant Life Protection Acts of 1872 and 1897 were introduced in response to the outcry caused by these revelations. They represent the first statutory attempt to redress the position of illegitimate children. Not only did they try to ensure their safety by establishing a system through which nurses had to be registered, they also attempted to make it more difficult to lose all trace of a particular child.

Nevertheless, the voluntary societies tended to regard illegitimate children as being effectively without relations. In 1739 Thomas Coram had established the Foundling Hospital for the purpose of receiving those babies who might otherwise have been literally thrown on the rubbish tip. In 1890 the treasurer, Mr Gregory, gave evidence to the Select Committee on Infant Life Protection. He explained that the policy of the society was to relieve the mother of all responsibility for maintaining her child on the understanding that all future contacts would cease. Children were rebaptised after admission; mothers were not informed of the new name, they were simply given a number through which the child might be traced by

the society. It was possible for mothers who subsequently found themselves in a position to maintain their children to request their discharge, but the society reserved the right to decide whether or not to release them.

Mr Gregory's evidence to the Select Committee continued as follows:

800: Mr Knowles (committee): Does your Act give you special power.....? Yes, it gives us the children entirely.

801: That is to say that you may keep back from the child the name of its father or its mother? - Yes

802: And you may prevent the mother or the father finding out where the child is? - Yes, that is so; it becomes our child in fact; we are in loco parentis.

803: Can you give us a reference to the particular section?... I have got a section under my hand which I think affects that matter, but I think there is something in the charter even more strictly affecting it than this (102).

The section of the Act to which he was referring authorises the society to detain children until they reached their twenties. It says nothing about resisting claims from parents. The charter contains no reference at all to the matter. In spite of the weakness of its legal position, it was nevertheless the established policy of the Foundling Hospital that the unmarried mothers who placed their children in its care had no rights to their custody. The reasoning behind this may have been that the unmarried mothers forfeited their rights because they were not required to pay maintenance, but it is also arguable that, because the children were illegitimate, their parents were assumed to have little or no legal claim over them in the first place.

By the 1890s the Foundling Hospital was admitting only fifty children a year as compared with several hundreds received by each of the major rescue societies. Nevertheless the Foundling Hospital was the oldest

established children's society, and it seems likely that their policies were influential in moulding the practice of the more recent foundations.

Thus the voluntary societies seem to have held the assumption that the parents from whom they received their children had a particularly weak claim to their custody. This assumption may well have been reinforced by the fact that, although women had gained some authority in the field of juvenile emigration, the three major rescue societies: Dr Barnardo's, The Waifs and Strays and the National Children's Home, were all directed by men. The major legislation was largely introduced because these assumptions began to be challenged.

The Challenge from Parents

The problem for the voluntary societies was that the parents themselves began to interfere with the smooth working of the policies by assuming that they did possess rights to the custody of their children. Parents who were widely believed to be only too happy to relinquish their children refused to give them up completely. They reappeared, often when the child was old enough to help support the family, or sometimes at an earlier date when emigration threatened, and demanded their discharge. Those parents who found that the child in question had been placed out of their reach, could sue out a writ of habeas corpus against the society. Some of the Barnardo cases are well known, but there were several others. One of the earliest was 're Elizabeth Daley', fought (and won) by her sister against the Refuge for Homeless and Destitute Children which was preparing to send her to Tasmania in 1860 (103).

It seems incredible that relations who had little education and even less money could have succeeded in taking such cases to court, but they had powerful backing. In virtually all the major habeas corpus cases brought against charitable institutions by a child's relations in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the petitioner was a Roman Catholic. It was sometimes even acknowledged by the judge that parents were receiving powerful support from the Roman Catholic Church (104). In *R. v. Barnardo* (Jones' case) the alternative guardian proposed for an illegitimate, destitute child, was Sir Robert Fowler, an influential Roman Catholic (105). The Roman Catholic Church was not simply fighting to obtain inmates for its own institutions: in *R. v. Gyngall* (106) and *re Elizabeth Daley* (107) it was attempting to uphold the rights of parents and guardians to the custody of their children. It is difficult to overestimate the part it played in the debate.

In 1891 Barnardo fought a major case on the grounds that the child in question was illegitimate, and therefore the mother had no right to his custody. Although this argument appears to have prevailed in the case of *Margaret White* in 1848 (108), in 1883 the Court of Appeal had ruled that: 'the mother of an illegitimate infant has a natural right to its custody, which will be regarded by the court' (109). The Barnardo homes had been involved in the 1883 case, but this did not prevent their director from using the same arguments in Jones' case, which he defended himself in 1891. A mother had tried to remove a child from his homes and place him in a Roman Catholic Institution. Barnardo refused to release the child and answered the writ of habeas corpus with the argument that:

The mother of an illegitimate child has not all the rights of the father or mother of a legitimate child; she is not the guardian of the child by law, and may contract herself out of such right as she has...(110).

He also argued that the mother herself was unfit. This latter argument failed, and with regard to the child's illegitimacy, Lord Esher, M.R., laid down that:

With respect to [the mother's] right to the custody of the child there is no difference whatever between the rights of the mother of an illegitimate child and the rights of the father or mother, if there is no father living, of a legitimate child (111).

Because the legality of their more dubious policies was being increasingly questioned in the courts, the voluntary societies joined in the debate regarding the rights of parents. In both 1889 and 1890, Lord Brabazon, the Earl of Meath, introduced an Adoption of Children Bill into the House of Lords. Both Bills were intended to lay down provisions by which parents who had placed their children with third parties might be prevented from reclaiming them unless this was seen to be in the child's best interests. Although Brabazon tried to insist that he was acting independently and not with the express purpose of enabling 'a certain well-known institution' to break the law, one cannot overlook the fact that he was deeply involved in the child rescue movement and, indeed, was President of Dr Barnardo's Homes in 1889.

The first Adoption of Children Bill (1889), tried to introduce adoption orders which could be made out either to private foster parents or to organisations which cared for children. The Bill epitomises the dilemma between the desire to give greater powers to both individuals and societies which fostered children, and the fear that these powers would

relieve parents of their responsibilities. Thus although Sections 1-7 arrange for formal adoption orders to be made by the courts, Section 8 makes it plain that adopted children were to receive none of the rights of blood relations, while Section 9 ensured that:

In the event of such child becoming chargeable to the parish by reason of the inability of the foster parent to maintain the child, recourse may be had to the persons legally responsible for its support as if no order of adoption had been made (112).

The Lord Chancellor objected to the Bill on the very grounds that:

the persons who drew this Bill found they were met at every turn by qualifications and restrictions that finally took away the original vigour and force of what they proposed to enact (113).

and it failed.

The 1890 Bill was a much more radical proposal. Indeed its provisions were very similar to those introduced by the Adoption Act 1926, but again it failed. On this occasion the Lord Chancellor flatly opposed the measure on the grounds that: 'The English Law does not recognise such a thing as contract to get rid of parental authority and obligations. No such agreement can, by law, be made' (114).

The Bill which was finally passed and became The Custody of Children Act 1891 had been pruned of all the more radical elements. It simply ratified the existing agreements between parents and voluntary societies, making parents legally liable to pay if children were removed prematurely, and allowing third parties the right to reply to a writ of habeas corpus that the parent had abandoned the child or was unfit. Nevertheless, this Act proved to be extremely effective: Barnardo claimed to have made successful use of it in more than eighty cases (115).

The Custody of Children Act and the earlier Industrial Schools Acts only conferred grounds for custody, not guardianship. But other Acts introduced in the same period made it clear that the concept that a parent could be replaced as the legal guardian for his child was no longer confined to the Court of Chancery. The 1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act provided that, where it was proved that the seduction or prostitution of a young girl had been caused, encouraged or favoured by her parents:

it shall be in the power of the court to divest such father, mother, guardian, master or mistress of all authority over her and appoint any person or persons willing to take charge of such girl to be her guardian (116).

Similar provisions were made through the fit person orders of the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act 1889.

The alternative guardians were generally the directors of the voluntary bodies. The officers of the Poor Law were constrained by the fear that if they offered to remove parental rights and powers from children in their care they would be met with an overwhelming demand and a consequent rise in the rates. The question was considered at length by the House of Lords Select Committee on Poor Relief in 1888, and the fear was repeatedly expressed that large numbers of parents would have no objection to being declared 'morally dead' if that meant they would be deprived of the custody of their children (117). Thus the first Poor Law Amendment Act to transfer parental rights and powers to the guardians of the poor only applied to children who had been orphaned or deserted (118). Guardians increased their control over children in their care, but they did not seek to replace existing parents. The provisions for the public sector to replace a parent who had been proved unfit only followed ten years later,

in 1899 (119).

All the provisions by which parents might be replaced incorporated a concept of parental fitness developed through Chancery and through the later Industrial Schools Acts. A parent was unfit if his actions were seen, in some material way, to be damaging to the welfare of his child. Transfers of custody might be made on the grounds that they were in the child's interest: both the improved rights of mothers following the Custody of Infants Acts of 1840 and 1873, and the provisions by which truants might be committed to Industrial Schools might be seen in this light. However complete transfers of guardianship from a father to a mother, or from either parent to a third party could not be supported except on the grounds of parental unfitness. The principle that in such transactions the child's individual welfare should be given some consideration appears to have originated in the second half of the nineteenth century, but it was not, by law, made the paramount consideration until the Guardianship of Infants Act 1925. After this principle had been incorporated into law the way was open for the introduction of a system of legal adoption. Unlike transfers of guardianship, legal adoptions were permanent and irrevocable transfers of all parental rights and powers based not on the grounds of unfitness, but on the sole consideration of the infant's welfare.

Many of the earlier changes in the law were introduced as a result of pressure from the voluntary societies to receive some legal sanction for policies designed to sever the relationship between separated children and parents who were deemed unfit. The remaining chapters in this

thesis further examine the interactions between the voluntary societies and their representatives, the children in their care, and the parents and relatives who relinquished custody.

CHAPTER THREE: EARLY DEVELOPMENTS IN POLICY

The Establishment of an Anglican Society

The Church of England Central Home for Waifs and Strays was founded by Edward de Montjoie Rudolf in 1881. According to his biographers, Rudolf was motivated to begin his work by the fate of two children who had been members of the Sunday school at which he taught. They suddenly stopped attending when their father died, and were subsequently discovered in a very neglected condition, begging for food. Their mother had been left with seven children to support, and the two eldest were forced to pick a living from the streets in order to avoid the workhouse. Rudolf found that no Church of England home or orphanage would accept the children unless payment could be provided, and eventually was forced to place them in the care of Dr Barnardo. Children in Barnardo's homes received a Christian upbringing, but this was undenominational. Barnardo himself was a Plymouth brother. Rudolf felt that the established Church of England had betrayed two of its children by allowing them to be brought up outside its teaching (1).

The Waifs and Strays Society was thus founded in order to allow the Anglican church to take part in what was essentially a sectarian struggle. It was one of the last of a vast network of voluntary agencies to be established with the support of the churches in the latter part of the nineteenth century in order to civilise the poor by introducing them and/or their children to Christianity. At the time there was little ecumenical discussion, and each branch of the Christian church tended to

see itself as representing the true faith, in isolation from its fellows. Suspicion tended to crystallise along the division between Roman Catholic and Protestant churches. The Roman Catholic Relief Act was not passed until 1829 ; possibly because of the obvious faith of its adherents, the Roman Catholic church was still viewed as dangerously subversive: after all, its members owed their first allegiance to a foreign potentate whom they placed above the Queen (2). The antagonism between Dr Barnardo and the Roman Catholic Church has been well-documented (3). The sectarianism of other voluntary societies is also evident in many contemporary sources which reveal that there were also deep divisions between organisations from different Protestant denominations. The Parliamentary debates on the 1891 Custody of Children Act, and the unsuccessful bills which preceded it suggest that Barnardo and the Roman Catholic societies were not the only organisations which attempted to poach children from one another. It was suggested that the 'proselytising' societies paid parents to agree to relinquish their children. The religious clause of the Custody of Children Act and subsequent adoption legislation, by which parents of separated children retain the right to decide on their religious upbringing, appears to have been introduced in order to counteract the proselytising rivalry between different voluntary societies (4). The competition between societies of different denominations may be the reason why managers of reformatories and industrial schools were required to present returns indicating the number of children who had been committed to institutions that were not conducted according to their original religious persuasion, and produce evidence as to the provisions available

for transfer, or for separate religious instruction (5).

Religious differences were not the only reason for rivalry between the voluntary societies. Many of the major organisations were competing for funds from a relatively small range of potential supporters. The editors of the Waifs and Strays magazine repeatedly expressed their distress at the ease with which the more evangelical societies such as Dr Barnardo's Homes and the Salvation Army could raise funds, in comparison with their own, less successful efforts, for money which went to evangelical societies which were not attached to a specific denomination might well have come to them (6). In order to retain the interest of their subscribers, societies had to produce concrete evidence of achievements and demand. This was most easily shown in the growing numbers of children helped, and in the visible increase of residential accommodation. Thus a vicious circle arose in which the society which could attract the most children would also have the greatest appeal to subscribers, and vice versa. Therefore societies were also competing for children, particularly where parents had only nominal allegiance to a particular denomination.

Barnardo was perhaps the most competitive of the nineteenth century philanthropists, and it was almost inevitable that Rudolf should come into conflict with him. He claimed that the Waifs and Strays Society had stolen its title from an expression used by him (7). In 1895 Barnardo publicly alleged that Rudolf gained support by denigrating his own organisation, although it was his work which had enabled the Waifs and Strays Society to come into existence (8). Rudolf's reply, which was refused publication in the Barnardo magazine that had carried the original allegations, suggests

that Barnardo's rather paranoid remarks may have been unjustified (9). Nevertheless, the assertion that a child would otherwise be obliged to enter Dr Barnardo's Homes remained a potent ground for admission to the Waifs and Strays , as is demonstrated in the application letters for at least three of the sample cases (10).

When asked by the Mundella committee, Rudolf agreed that his was 'not merely a philanthropic institution, but distinctly a religious mission'(11). His first action in founding the 'Waifs and Strays' was to persuade the Archbishop of Canterbury to accept the presidency of the Society, and with this backing he proceeded to embed his organisation deeply within the structure of the church. A number of bishops became vice-presidents of the Society and the parish clergy were recruited to drum up support. The title page of the Waifs and Strays' magazine carried an engraving of Christ surrounded by the text: 'Suffer little children to come unto me'; the list of 'Twenty-Four Reasons' for supporting the Society, published at regular intervals from about 1886, had as its first item:

Because the Church, having her own faith and way of working, cannot and should not be content to leave so large and vital a work as the care and rescue of orphans, destitute, neglected or imperilled children, entirely or even chiefly to those belonging to other religious bodies, however much she honours their work (12).

All children who came into the Society's care had to be baptised into the Anglican church. Three hundred and one (75%) of the children in the sample had been baptised into the Church of England before admission, though sometimes the ceremony was hastily performed in order to secure a place (13). A further 31 children were baptised after admission, sometimes

for the second time if no proof could be furnished of an earlier christening (14). Three of the sample children had been previously baptised as Roman Catholics, and a further four were dissenters (15).

Children boarded out by the Society were often supervised by the local vicar. Those placed in residential homes had prayers or religious instruction two or three times a day, and were examined by the diocesan inspector. Many of the children were confirmed before discharge: in particular this seems to have been introduced as a prophylactic measure for those who were about to emigrate (16). As the Rev. Horsley claimed: 'There was a great deal to be said in favour of the children, ere they go into the midst of temptation, being fortified with that grace with which they could resist it' (17).

The case of Jane N. demonstrates the sectarian problems which could arise when children were admitted from another faith. This child was sent out by her father to sell matches, and told not to return until she had earned a shilling. She was picked up by the police one night 'in a fainting condition' and, although a Roman Catholic, was placed in the Society's home at Hull. Seventeen months after her admission, the Rev. Yates, who had the charge of her two sisters in a home run by the Sunday School Union, wrote to warn Rudolf that the father was attempting to discharge all three children to a Roman Catholic school. The Roman Catholic bishop had given his permission, and both the president and vice president of the Catholic society were demanding the release of the children to their care. Yates was hoping to resist by proving that the children were illegitimate and therefore that the father had no right to

transfer them. In the event the crisis blew over: the father appeared at the Hull home, was severely scolded for his ingratitude to the Society, and told not to return. Two hours later he reappeared, bearing a signed document which authorised the Waifs and Strays to keep Jane, and revoked any previous order he had given for her removal. Both Yates and the secretary to the Hull home felt it incumbent upon them to resist the attempts of the Catholic church to poach children who were being brought up as Anglicans. Rudolf's position is not so clear (see below) (18).

The strength of sectarian feeling displayed by supporters of the Society inevitably acted at times to the detriment of its children. When Edward P. was ten, his sponsor wrote to Rudolf saying that she would no longer be able to pay maintenance as 'having been received into the Roman Catholic Church I must not pay for the support of a boy at a Church of England Home' (19). Another child, Evelyn F., was removed from a secure foster home when the widow who looked after her married a non-conformist and ceased to be a communicant of the Church of England (20).

Early Policy Initiatives

Initially Rudolf's aim was modest: to establish two homes in London in which destitute children could be assured of an Anglican upbringing. By 1883 the scope of operations had expanded: the name of the organisation was changed from the Central Home to the Central Society for Providing Homes for Waifs and Strays: it was now planned to found a home in every diocese.

Rudolf himself had neither social position nor money. He was only

twenty-nine when he began to draw up his plans and solicit donations. He was relatively inexperienced in the field of child care and he also had a full-time job as a clerk in the Civil Service. He was not even a member of the Anglican clergy whom he sought to rally to his support. It was obvious that he could not hope to establish a society that might give the Anglican church a foothold in the developing child care field without relying on the help of others who had more influence and experience than himself. Some of these people held strong views on the type of children who should be taken in, and the sort of care which they should be offered. In particular, early policies were moulded by the influence of other contemporary issues such as the wide-ranging debate on the most appropriate forms of care for pauper children, and the more specific questions addressed by the purity movement and the campaign to promote juvenile emigration. Many members of the early executive, together with some of the most generous subscribers, had taken a prominent part in these debates and their opinions shaped the way in which the new society developed.

The Debate on the Care of Separated Children

Questions concerning the most appropriate forms of care for separated children have been publicly debated since at least the middle of the nineteenth century, and have not yet been adequately resolved. At times fostering has appeared to produce the most successful outcomes, and at other times the argument has swung back in favour of residential care. In the 1880s the subject was hotly debated, not only in the specialist

magazines of voluntary societies such as Dr Barnardo's Night and Day, Our Waifs and Strays, The Reformatory and Refuge Journal, and even the Charity Organisation Reporter, but also in journals such as the Nineteenth Century Magazine, which were aimed at a much wider, general audience. The arguments have been amply described elsewhere (21), and will only be considered in general terms here.

By the 1880s, the large scale massing of children in institutions, which, twenty years earlier, had seemed to solve the problem of educating workhouse children away from adult paupers, had attracted criticism from several quarters. The effects of institutional life upon the personality, to be documented by Goffman in 1961, had already begun to be recognised; the term 'institutionised' was introduced at least as early as 1875 (22). Many observers described how children brought up in large institutions were notably dull, lacking in initiative, and prone to instability and fits of uncontrollable temper. Dickens' Tattycoram, who was brought up in the Foundling Hospital, is a fictional example of a personality that was, and still is, often described as a typical result of institutional upbringing (23).

Some of the larger institutions for children were the poor law district schools. From the time of Jane Nassau Senior's adverse report in 1874 they were subject to intense criticism from child care reformers. Their inmates were believed to grow up unhealthy and stunted: the boys were too small to be accepted by the forces, and the girls not strong enough for service in discriminating households (24). Jane Nassau Senior's finding that only 46% of girls from poor law schools were satisfactorily employed

in later life was disputed (25) but her report created an impression which proved impossible to dispel. Later studies by MABYS and those who attempted to refute the Mundella Report, proving that at least by the 1890s the situation had improved, nevertheless failed to eradicate the belief that the majority of district school children became criminals, prostitutes or adult paupers in later life (26).

The deleterious effects of institutional life on children, particularly girls, were believed to result from its failure to provide any experience of life within a normal family. The majority of poor law boys were trained for the forces or the merchant navy, where one institution was simply exchanged for another. However, a girl's place was in the home, both as a servant in the years before her marriage, and , later, as a wife and mother. With no first-hand experience of family life, the odds were heavily weighted against her succeeding in either of these spheres (27).

The boarding-out system was widely welcomed as offering an antidote to the dangers of institutionalisation. Children who were placed with foster parents in the country were likely to be absorbed into the life of the community, and quickly lose all trace of their earlier deprivation. Boarded-out children were sometimes seen as bringing financial advantages to a village, as the allowance would provide cash to pay rent; children accustomed to street life were also believed to exercise a stimulating influence on the duller country children in a village school. One of the greatest advantages of boarding out was that foster children were believed to forge permanent links with a home to which they could return during periods of sickness or unemployment in

adult life. Much boarding out, including the boarding out of pauper children outside their original unions, was organised by committees of middle-class ladies, whose interest was believed to have a civilising effect on the children involved (28).

However the schemes were not entirely unopposed. The suspicion that boarded-out children, whose foster parents might be paid between three and five shillings per week maintenance money, were given an unfair advantage over the children of independent labourers, prevented many boards of guardians from using the voluntary committees that were set up from 1869 onwards to receive and supervise foster children. In 1877, only 49 out of 92 voluntary boarding out committees had any children to supervise (29). The system was unpopular with parents, who, though happy to see their children enter an institution, were uncomfortable at their being placed with families of their own class (30). Moreover, for reasons that were never made entirely clear, boarding out was only considered suitable for younger children.

There was also a growing body of evidence to suggest that boarded-out children needed careful supervision if they were to avoid exploitation. The evidence from the inquiry into the Scottish system, which had been established at a much earlier date, suggested that boarded-out children were often neglected or ill-treated, particularly if their foster parents were poor. Most English boarding-out regulations drawn up for both the public and the voluntary sectors contained a clause forbidding children to be placed with paupers (31).

One of the major drawbacks of boarding out was that parents of the

children could damage the placement if they visited their child and upset the foster parents. The majority of foster parents preferred to take in orphans. Initially, poor law children were only fostered if they had been orphaned or deserted: their addresses were concealed from relatives who were sometimes denied any subsequent contact (32). Barnardo, who was an acknowledged leader of the boarding-out movement, overcame the problem of access by forbidding any unsupervised contact between natural and foster parents: other social reformers engineered an even more definite break by placing their foster children with 'adoptive parents' who agreed to forgo the maintenance payments in exchange for custody of the child. This practice anticipated the law by some forty years, but it was nevertheless commonly used by some of the minor rescue societies, and by Dr Stephenson's Home (33).

Although the debate about the most appropriate forms of care for separated children centred on the treatment of pauper children, it was used as a focus for arguments about the care of children admitted to the voluntary societies. In the early 1880s Rudolf himself does not appear to have had experience of work with pauper children. However, the poor law system was organised on a parochial basis, and all clerical magistrates were, ex officio, guardians of the poor; it is reasonable to suppose that many of the Anglican clergy who sat on the early Waifs and Strays executive committee would have been aware of the debate about appropriate forms of care for pauper children and that their opinions influenced the decisions about the type of provisions the new society should offer.

In establishing the Waifs and Strays, one of Rudolf's first moves was to circularise a large number of Anglican clergy to ascertain their views as to the type of work his new society should undertake. Canon Erskine-Clarke, who was both vicar of Battersea and chairman of his local poor law union, replied saying that he had 'no faith in institutional life as distinguished from family life' and he would not help a society bent on providing the former type of care (34). In fact, the family was widely regarded as the God-given means for the raising of children, and it was difficult to square the destruction of family ties entailed by admission to a voluntary society, with this belief. If the type of care offered could replicate the family environment, then separation from the child's own, possibly degraded, relations, became, from a theological point of view, much more acceptable. 'God never intended children to be brought up in flocks, but in families'(35). In the circumstances it was, perhaps, unsurprising that at the first meeting of the executive committee a resolution was passed, stating that 'in providing homes for children, the family life would be preferable to institutional life' (36). This decision clearly satisfied Erskine-Clarke, for he offered Rudolf free advertising in Church Bells, the religious periodical of which he was proprietor, and his name appears on the first subscription list. He later sat on the emigration committee and became a Vice President of the Society (37).

The resolution to aim at replicating family life led to the Society's adoption of boarding out, and the establishment of small family group homes as two of its three major policies. The third, emigration, will be discussed later in this chapter.

Boarding Out and Family Group Homes

The Society aimed to board out all children who were under the age of seven at the time of admission. By this means:

not only is a real home provided for the little ones, but also a mother's love. This, many of them, alas! have never known, and it is impossible to overestimate the marvellous effect which such a revelation may have in forming their characters (38).

The boarding-out regulations stated that: 'Children shall not, as a rule, be boarded out at a later age than seven years, and in no case at a later age than ten years' (39). I have not been able to discover why boarding out seemed inappropriate for older children. Perhaps those who came into the Society as adolescents were considered to be too difficult for ordinary foster parents to manage. Certainly a number of the children in the sample were moved from boarded-out placements with widows to residential care when they were seen to require a masculine hand to control them (40). Barnardo regularly moved his foster children back into residential care when they approached adolescence in order to train them for the labour market. The experiences of a few children suggest that the Waifs and Strays occasionally operated a similar policy, but it was by no means a regular practice. The majority of the Waifs and Strays children were removed from foster parents for other reasons, or remained with them until adulthood (see below, Chapter 11). Perhaps children coming into the Society as teenagers were seen to have only a short time in which to prepare for adulthood, and in their cases the need for the sort of industrial training that could be provided in the homes was seen as more

important than the establishment of substitute family ties.

Sixty-two children in the sample were boarded out in their first placement with the Society; 42 (67.7%) were aged seven and under, while a further 16 (25.8%) were under ten. Twenty-six others moved to foster parents at a later stage in their care careers, but for several of these, boarding out was a form of lodging or apprenticeship in early adult life. Thus Annie M. was boarded out at the age of fourteen with a dressmaker who took her in at a small fee in order to teach her a trade (41). Another child, Annie B., was thirteen when it was finally decided that she would never be capable of earning her living; she was boarded out in Harrow for nine months to re-establish her settlement there before being discharged to the workhouse (42). Only four of the sample children who were admitted directly to foster parents were over the Society's regulation age.

However, although the majority of boarded-out children were within the stipulated age-range, the Society's claim that 'speaking generally, children under seven are boarded out' is not supported by the evidence. Table 3.1 gives details of the first placements of all the sample children who were aged seven and under at the time of admission. There were 111 children in this age-group, and so the 42 children who were boarded out only make up 37.8% of the total. Even at this age, the largest group of children were placed in some form of residential care.

Although boarding out may have been considered to be the most appropriate provision for young children, its very success was a disadvantage to a society dependent upon charitable donations for its

TABLE 3.1
 INITIAL PLACEMENTS FOR CHILDREN AGED SEVEN AND UNDER AT ADMISSION
 (Waifs and Strays sample 1887-1894: 111 cases)

	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>
Receiving home	05	4.5
Boarded out	42	37.8
W & S Children's home	27	24.3
Home run by another society	12	10.8
W & S Industrial school	6	5.4
Other	19	17.1
<hr/>		
TOTALS	111	100
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income. Schemes to board out or emigrate children were both intended to remove them from their former surroundings and absorb them into a host community. However, children who were satisfactorily absorbed ceased to be a visible expression of the Society's work. On the other hand, the children in residential accommodation were an advertisement for the Society in every village in which a home was established (43).

Where residential care aimed at fulfilling the same functions as boarding out it was perhaps inevitable that there should be some blurring of the margin between the two. It is evident from the case-histories that some of the smaller homes of six or seven children were confused with foster homes. Thus children who were placed at Hillingdon Heath Cottage Home (capacity: ten children) were sometimes erroneously categorised as 'boarded-out' (44). The Society claimed that its residential accommodation was not institutional, and this blurring of the distinction between foster and residential care must have encouraged the widely held belief that the homes were able to offer a substitute form of family life. Homes were kept deliberately small, though the claim that, in the non-specialist homes, the average capacity was sixteen boys or twenty girls ignored the wide range in size from six to forty-four beds. Both the reception centre at Byfleet, and the home for crippled children admitted children of both sexes, but only on a temporary basis: elsewhere, children were carefully segregated. Although the boys' homes might have a married master, whose wife acted as a matron, the girls' homes appear to have been run by widows or single women, and would not have provided a substitute father figure. The children attended local schools, and in theory were not dressed

distinctively, though some of the group photographs posed for the Society's magazine appear to belie this latter assertion (45).

Even the larger homes of thirty or forty children were small in the context of the time. Only about a third of Barnardo's homes of the period catered for less than fifty children. The majority were built for a hundred or more (46). Even so, the Waifs and Strays children arriving en masse at the village school in single sex groups of twenty or so, cannot have passed unnoticed. Moreover it was far from desirable that they should. The homes depended to a large extent on the interest and patronage of the local gentry: to acquire this they needed to be visible. They were open to visitors at any time, and as an advertisement of the Society's work the sight of a group of children rescued, at least in theory, from the slums of the large cities and now growing into clean, well-trained, respectable members of the class from which servants were drawn, can hardly have been bettered.

Thus the provision of residential accommodation became the most significant of the schemes used by the Society, and during the 1880s and 1890s, the period of the study, it came to be by far the most widely used. The type of accommodation provided was a clear indication of the way the Society wanted to present itself to the outside world.

In the initial years in particular, it was the Society's executive which decided on the types of accommodation to be provided, and also on the sort of children for whom they should cater. The groups of children provided for within the framework of the first family group homes can thus give us a clear indication of the particular concerns of the more prominent

members of the executive committee.

By 1885 the Society had acquired ten homes. Two were the original receiving homes planned by Rudolf, three were homes certified under the Local Government Board for reception of children who were in the care of the poor law authorities, four were industrial schools certified for the reception of girls rescued from immoral surroundings under the 1880 Industrial Schools Act Amendment Act, and one was an established laundry home for girls, handed over to the Society by the committee of ladies who had previously managed it. Plans had also been made to establish an emigration home in Canada, and a farm home for boys in the diocese of Lichfield.

Pauper children

I have already suggested that the clergy would have been aware of the arguments concerning the type of provision most suitable for destitute children through their involvement with the Poor Law. In 1862 legislation had been passed enabling Boards of Guardians to place pauper children in voluntary homes and to contribute to the societies a sum equivalent to the cost of their maintenance within the workhouse. In 1883, the Waifs and Strays Society gave considerable attention to the question of applying for certification for some of its homes, and several members of the early executive committee took an active part in this debate (47).

Perhaps the most forceful advocate of the admission of pauper children was Miss A.L.Lee. Between about 1882 and 1895 she was deeply involved in

the management of the Waifs and Strays Society. She served on the executive committee from 1884 and helped edit the monthly magazine. She was made the superintendent of the Marylebone Home for girls in 1882, which she managed for fourteen years, with assistance from her sister. Miss Lee also acted as the Society's boarding out inspector from 1892-3. Her address suggests that she was wealthy, and in fact she was one of the two women who became trustees of the Society when it became incorporated in 1893. Unusually for a woman of her class, she made her private home available for the reception of destitute children: several of the sample children were placed there at some stage, as also were a number of pauper children (48).

It is not known exactly when Miss Lee became concerned in the care of pauper children, although she argued that the Waifs and Strays should take up their cause in 1883 (49) and the Society's Marylebone Home, of which she was superintendent was certified by the Local Government Board in 1885. Presumably it was this concern which led her to become the first woman guardian on the Marylebone board, a position which she did not hold for long, for she found that the prevailing prejudice against women in public affairs handicapped her from taking an active part in discussions. In 1894 she was asked to give evidence to the Mundella Committee, and this was one of the numerous occasions on which she claimed that pauper children compared unfavourably with their contemporaries. Not only did she reiterate the arguments concerning the effects of institutional life upon development, she also claimed that those pauper children who were boarded out were offered less satisfactory placements than their contemporaries

from the Waifs and Strays Society. It is significant that her experience of inspecting both poor law and voluntary foster homes did not encourage her to advocate the advantages of the boarding-out system. Instead she claimed that the establishment of small certified homes in villages was the most suitable form of accommodation for separated children (50).

Pauper children were generally considered to receive inferior care in poor law establishments. Not only were they likely to be herded in large institutions with all the inherent disadvantages to their future development, they were also often discharged at a very early age with no relatives to fall back on, and with little or no after care. By offering to care for them in certified homes, the Society hoped to provide a substitute form of family life denied them by the Poor Law; it could also increase its missionary function by offering them the sound Anglican upbringing that the guardians could not be relied upon to provide (51).

Other considerations were more pragmatic: a society dependent upon voluntary donations needed to offer proof of demand in order to satisfy its contributors. Constant expansion was therefore an economic necessity and a steady flow of pauper children would regularly swell the numbers of admissions. The maintenance money paid by Boards of Guardians did not always cover the Society's expenses, but it nevertheless provided a reliable steady income which may well have been preferable to the uncertain flow of charitable offerings.

It appears from the case-papers that the Society actively sought out boards of guardians which were willing to place children in their care. In

1887, the clerk to the board of guardians at Croydon wrote to 'accept your offer to receive three girls, belonging to this union, at your Manningham Home '(52). The Society claimed that its charges for pauper children were less than half the weekly cost of maintenance in the poor law district schools. In 1888, following a meeting with J.W.Horsley, the Waifs and Strays' clerical secretary, :

the Epsom Board of Guardians ...there and then...agreed to place in his hands the whole of the orphan and deserted children in the Epsom workhouse, amounting to sixty-seven. He found good homes and foster parents, chiefly in the Warwickshire villages, for all the little ones, while the elder children - nineteen girls and nine boys - were placed in our Homes or in others affiliated to us (53).

The Society was also officially recognised by the Local Government Board as an emigration agency through which boards of guardians could send pauper children to the colonies (54). These children were not admitted to the homes in England, but joined the Waifs and Strays parties in Liverpool and sailed with them to Canada. They were nevertheless counted among the Society's admission statistics. Thirty-five of the sample children were referred and supported by boards of guardians, while a further ten were poor law children admitted solely for the purpose of emigration.

A powerful body of opinion held that the role of the voluntary sector was to provide a second tier of support to families which were socially superior to the inmates of the workhouse. Some of the more exclusive voluntary organisations refused to consider the children of workhouse inmates (55). A similar consideration may have lain behind the common refusal to admit illegitimate children. Such views were endorsed by the Local Government Board in 1871, and by the Charity Organisation

Society (56). Pauper children were generally considered to be socially inferior to the inmates of the voluntary homes. Many of those who applied for the admission of voluntary children to the Waifs and Strays Society argued that their proteges were 'superior' and should therefore be saved from the workhouse (57).

Initially the Waifs and Strays Society developed close links with the Charity Organisation Society, which was perhaps the most forceful exponent of this view. In 1882, Rudolf wrote to the editor of the Charity Organisation Reporter, asking local COS committees to refer cases to his society (58). Seven of the sample children were referred by the Charity Organisation Society, which also provided information in support of two other cases.

However any hope that children admitted to the Waifs and Strays Society would thereby avoid association with the 'inferior' workhouse children was belied by the Society's involvement with the poor law authorities. By 1894 just under a third (30%) of the Society's voluntary homes had been certified as suitable for the reception of pauper children. About half of these certified homes had been established specifically for the care of pauper children by private individuals who later handed over both management and children to the Waifs and Strays. One or two of these, such as the two homes for girls at Dickleburgh, continued to restrict their intake to pauper children. However in other homes, such as the boys home at Frome and the Mildenhall Home for girls, pauper and voluntary children mingled freely. Indeed the latter appears to have been established for that very purpose (59).

The Rescue of Young Girls

Although few distinctions may have been made between pauper and voluntary children, those committed to the Society's industrial schools did form a separate group that appears to have been kept segregated.

In 1881, when the Waifs and Strays was founded, the question of child sexual abuse, and particularly the procurement of young girls for prostitution, was being openly discussed. It is difficult to ascertain how great the problem actually was. The situation was similar to that following the Cleveland affair today, with some people convinced there was serious cause for concern, and others sceptical about the evidence produced. Certainly there was a high degree of moral panic, and rumours abounded of parents who sold their daughters into prostitution, and of Belgian procuresses who operated a flourishing white slave trade on the streets of London. The whole question was considered by the House of Lords Select Committee on the Law relating to the Protection of Young Girls, which examined the evidence concerning the white slave trade to France and Belgium in 1881, and then was reappointed to discuss the wider implications of juvenile prostitution in England in 1882. The committee did discover that Belgian procurers were recruiting prostitutes from the streets of London, but concluded that 'the girls whose cases were brought in evidence ...would appear (with possibly a few exceptions) to have already led immoral lives in this country and to have known that they were going abroad for immoral purposes'(60). Claims that 'a very large number, possibly the majority' were lured abroad with promises of respectable occupations, and then found , when it was too late, that they had agreed

to enter a brothel, were not substantiated. Nevertheless, tales of sinister abductions to the continent, however dubious the foundation, no doubt added a spice to the already scandalous debate, and this was exploited in the popular press (61).

The wider implications of the committee's report were more serious, for they concluded that: 'The evidence ... proves beyond doubt that juvenile prostitution, from an almost incredibly early age, is increasing to an appalling extent in England, and especially in London'(62). Both committees also found that the 1880 Industrial Schools Act Amendment Act which made it possible to commit children who were found to be living in brothels or frequenting the company of prostitutes, had been inadequately publicised, and was difficult to enforce.

Sir James Ingham told the Committee in 1881:

I do not think the evil of juvenile prostitution is entirely confined to females; I think it is applicable to a very large extent indeed to males. I mean that everything centring in London, as it does in this country; all examinations are held in London; everybody sends their sons up to London necessarily for examination; and a boy must be a paragon of virtue, who, at 16 or 17 can walk from 11 o'clock at night till half past twelve in the morning, from the top of Haymarket to the top of Grosvenor place, without being solicited to such an enormous extent that he is almost certain to fall. I do not know whether your Lordships have ever considered the enormous amount of disease which exists amongst these wretched women....there is scarcely a senior boy at Eton, a cadet at Sandhurst, or a subaltern in the army, who will not agree with me as to the enormous danger there is (63).

His assertions point to the double standard whereby the men who frequented prostitutes were exonerated from all blame for their growing numbers or for the spread of disease. It was this point which united those who tried to stem the increase in juvenile prostitution with the campaign

to repeal the Contagious Diseases Acts which was being fought over a similar period (1870-1886).

The whole question of juvenile prostitution became the subject of a well-publicised scandal in 1885. The editor of the Pall Mall Gazette, W.T.Stead, produced a series of articles claiming that in London it was a simple matter to procure a young girl for immoral purposes for the sum of £5, and proved that he himself had found no trouble in doing so as a publicity stunt. The girl's mother had not been party to the deception; she claimed that she had understood her daughter was to be employed as a servant, and amidst a blaze of publicity Stead was sent to prison for having fraudulently taken her from her parents (64).

It has been asserted that the furore which followed ensured the passing of the Criminal Law Amendment Act later that year. This Act incorporated many of the recommendations of the House of Lords Committee of 1882: it raised the age of consent to sixteen, and made it an offence for a householder to receive onto his premises any girl under the age of sixteen for the purposes of prostitution (65). It also allowed for any child whose parents had encouraged her seduction to be removed from their guardianship. The passing of the Act was marked by a vast demonstration in Hyde Park in August 1885 of all those involved in what was known as the purity campaign (66).

After this, the various purity organisations which had lobbied for the Act combined together to form the National Vigilance Association. Throughout the scandal over child prostitution there had been suggestions that the situation was exacerbated by overcrowding in the slums which made

it impossible for children to retain their sexual innocence. Hints at the connection between overcrowding, incest and prostitution were made to both of the Committees on the Protection of Young Girls (67). Further information about the prevalence of incest amongst the poor was also given to the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes in 1884, though witnesses were not encouraged to elaborate (68). From the time of its inception the National Vigilance Association took up the question of father-daughter incest , and later joined forces with the NSPCC to lobby for legislation, which was introduced in 1908 (69). The National Vigilance Association also tried to prevent masturbation and promote chastity: it is perhaps not without significance to the Waifs and Strays study that by 1891 some of the more prominent purity campaigners, including Josephine Butler, had found the National Vigilance Association to be increasingly repressive, and had become estranged (70).

The moral panic which surrounded the question of child prostitution and the subsequent concern over sexual abuse within the family has been considered at some length because it was to have considerable implications for the embryo Waifs and Strays Society.

In 1883 the Church of England launched its own purity society. Its aims were to raise the tone of public opinion, to lobby for changes in the legislation, to engage in preventive work for the suppression of corruption in minors, and to provide penitentiaries and Houses of Mercy for reformed prostitutes. There was a plan to establish a branch in each diocese. The Church of England Purity Society (CEPS) appears to have had the backing of the weight of the Anglican establishment. Its inaugural

meeting was held at Lambeth Palace, and chaired by the Archbishop of Canterbury. There was an episcopal vice-president in every diocese except for Norwich. Members of the aristocracy and senior clergymen were featured impressively in the list of diocesan members of council. At its peak in the 1890s the organisation could claim 120 parochial associations, and 19 diocesan branches (71).

The CEPS appears to have been, at least in part, an umbrella organisation, promoting the establishment of other local groups. Two local networks which were specifically encouraged by the CEPS were the Associations for the Care of Friendless Girls, and the branches of the Girls Friendly Society. It was through these societies in particular that a close link was established between the purity movement and the Waifs and Strays.

In its early days, the Church of England Waifs and Strays Society could not hope to boast such an impressive membership as the CEPS, though it was, perhaps deliberately, modelled on similar lines. However, among its plans for preventive work, the purity society aimed at the enforcement of the Industrial Schools Act Amendment Act of 1880, and the emigration or boarding out of destitute and pauper children (72). It cannot have escaped the attention of its executive that a Church of England children's society had recently been founded, which might well take on these tasks - especially as at least four people were actively involved in both organisations.

The Reverend R.C. Billing was made a member of the executive committee of the Waifs and Strays in 1883, and from 1885 to 1896 he served as its

vice-chairman. He was appointed a member of the council of the CEPS at its first meeting, in 1883. Before he was appointed Bishop of Bedford, he held a living in Spitalfields in the East End. He must have had first hand experience of the plight of those living in the London slums. The Rev. W. St Hill Bourne also had a parish in London's East End. He was on the executive committees of both the CEPS and the Waifs and Strays, serving on the latter for over thirty years, and becoming a vice-president in 1915 (73).

Although these two clergymen were clearly involved in the purity movement, the extent of their activity is not well-documented. However that of another worker, Ellice Hopkins, was at one time well-known, though it has since been largely forgotten. Since the early 1870s she had been a tireless campaigner for the protection of young girls from prostitution. Like Josephine Butler, who led the campaign for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts, she had found that her involvement with the purity movement had allowed her to take on a public role which would have been denied her in many other spheres on account of her sex. Both these campaigners were at times vilified for their concern over matters that were generally considered too distasteful for respectable women to be allowed to contemplate, but they nevertheless achieved impressive success, not the least in encouraging other, respectable women to take up their cause.

Ellice Hopkins was believed to have been instrumental in founding over two hundred associations, refuges and training homes for girls 'in moral danger', and a score of vigilance committees (74). In Brighton she

formed a scheme to recruit young prostitutes and 'less respectable' girls at risk into preventive training homes, where they would be 'worked up' until they could enter the more respectable organisations such as the Girls Friendly Society and the YWCA. The scheme was run by a ladies association which also took up 'emigration, workhouse wards, educational work, petitioning etc. In fact they are a body of educated women banded together to protect their own womanhood from degradation'(75).Ladies Associations for the Care of Friendless Girls, which specifically drew on a traditional relationship between middle-class women and the poor were established, along the lines of the Brighton scheme, in many parts of the country .

In 1883 Ellice Hopkins also founded the White Cross Army, a sort of sexual temperance league, which invited young men to promise to avoid concourse with prostitutes, to 'put down all indecent language and coarse jests', and 'to use every possible means to fulfil the command 'keep thyself pure' (76). By 1885, 15,000 men had taken the White Cross pledge (77).

By the 1880s Ellice Hopkins had achieved considerable recognition and respect. She was invited to give evidence to the Select Committee on the Protection of Young Girls, and she was also sub-poenaed to appear at W.T.Stead's trial. Her address to the Church congress in 1882 was influential in establishing the Church of England Purity Society. Although she was not apparently a member of this organisation (ladies could advise the executive committee, but were not invited to join), it nevertheless actively promoted two of her schemes: the establishment of

Ladies' Associations for the Care of Friendless Girls, and branches of the White Cross Army. In 1891 the Church of England Purity Society and the White Cross Army amalgamated (78) .

Ellice Hopkins is also generally given the credit for the introduction of the Industrial Schools Act Amendment Act of 1880. After it had been implemented , she tried to create a chain of industrial schools which would be prepared to accept children whose sexual experience was considered to bar them from association with their contemporaries. In 1881 she approached Barnardo with £200 and asked him to establish a certified cottage home for children committed under these circumstances. However, like many others, she objected to Barnardo's flamboyant methods of advertising, and her link with his organisation appears to have remained tenuous. In 1884, presumably with the backing of the other members of both executives, she approached Rudolf with a similar sum which was used to found the Ashurst industrial school for girls aged twelve to fourteen. Later that year a second Waifs and Strays industrial school was founded at her request, for girls under the age of eight, at Hemel Hempstead. In 1885 she donated further funds for the foundation of a third industrial school, initially for children of intermediate age, at Coldash in Berkshire. The matron was appointed on her recommendation. By 1885 Ellice Hopkins' name appears on the list of members of the Waifs and Strays executive committee. She did not remain an active member of the Society, but she had succeeded in creating a strong emphasis on rescue work (79).

Although Ellice Hopkins' own active involvement with the Society was

fairly shortlived, she was closely associated with the Rev J.W.Horsley, who also had strong connections with both the CEPS and the Waifs and Strays. Horsley had become involved in the rescue of young girls from prostitution during the ten years he spent as chaplain at Clerkenwell gaol. In his evidence to the Select Committee on the Protection of Young Girls he drew the connection between overcrowding, incest and prostitution. He appears at some stage to have been appointed by the Reformatory and Refuge Union to search out girls who could be committed under the Industrial Schools Act Amendment Act of 1880; in 1884 he published a pamphlet about his experiences in this capacity, with a forward by Ellice Hopkins; as editor of the Waifs and Strays magazine, he announced, in 1885, that five hundred copies would be distributed in order to obtain funds for this branch of the Society's work (80). In 1883, he was appointed to the executive of the CEPS, and also served as a member of its weekly board, which suggests he was heavily involved with the movement (81).

Horsley became a member of the executive committee of the Waifs and Strays in 1882, and from 1886 to 1889 he acted as full-time clerical secretary to the Society, publicising its work, and soliciting donations throughout the country. He also edited the monthly paper Our Waifs and Strays for several years. He was thus closely involved in establishing the Society as a national organisation. In the early years his role was much more central than that of Rudolf, for although the latter retained overall control, until 1890 he was only able to devote his spare time to the Society, while Horsley had a full-time appointment. Horsley's opinions

must have stamped the Society's policy: even after he had left its employ to take up a living he retained his seat on the executive committee, and seems to have continued to undertake public appearances on their behalf. It was partly in this capacity that he gave evidence to the Mundella Committee in 1896. Horsley was proud of the fact that in 1888 the Waifs and Strays Society had more industrial schools than any other voluntary organisation (82). It is likely to be through his influence that the Society established a close link with the Reformatory and Refuge Union, renting an office on its premises, and participating in deputations to Parliament to lobby for changes in the industrial schools legislation (83).

The purity movement seems not to have considered the sexual abuse of young boys: possibly the strong taboos on homosexuality prevented the subject from being aired. Both J.W.Horsley and Ellice Hopkins had been actively concerned in the rescue of young girls for some time before the Waifs and Strays Society was opened. Horsley claimed to have interviewed no less than 20,000 girls arrested for soliciting and placed in Clerkenwell gaol. The statistics which he produced from some of these interviews incidentally belie two of the popular arguments promoted by the campaigners: that many prostitutes were little more than children and that they were forced into immorality by their parents' greed: only 0.3% of his sample of 3,076 girls became prostitutes to support their parents, while 91% had been seduced when they were sixteen or older; 41% of his sample 'went on the streets as a matter of choice'. These data do not appear to have been adequately assessed by any of those involved, and

were disregarded by Horsley in later writings (84).

J.W.Horsley and Ellice Hopkins are therefore likely to have urged the importance of paying particular attention to the rescue of young girls. Maria Rye and the Rev.K.F.Gibbs, both of whom were deeply involved in the juvenile emigration movement (see below), are also known to have supported this argument (85). It is therefore perhaps unsurprising that throughout the years of the sample, consistently more girls were admitted to the Society than boys. Table 3.2 shows the sexual ratio of children admitted between 1887 and 1894. The figures correspond with the sample data, but are taken from the Society's published statistics, because they will be compared with the numbers of placements available, and these can only be extracted from the latter information.

Girls of any age who were sexually experienced were not considered as suitable subjects for boarding out or for placement in homes with other 'uncontaminated' children. They required 'careful training' in small segregated residential homes. Right from the beginning the Society gave priority to the provision of residential accommodation for girls, and once homes had been established, the bias automatically continued. In this of course they were aided by the large sums of money donated by Ellice Hopkins. She repeatedly asserted that there were four times as many industrial school places for boys as for girls. Not only were her homes specifically founded for girls who, on account of their 'contamination' could not be found places in ordinary industrial schools, they were also intended in part to redress the overall balance.

Thus of the first ten homes acquired by the Society, nine were for girls

TABLE 3.2

SEXUAL RATIOS OF CHILDREN ADMITTED TO THE WAIFS AND STRAYS SOCIETY:1887-94
(Figures extracted from published statistics and case summaries)

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>BOYS</u>	<u>GIRLS</u>	<u>TOTALS</u>
1887	FIGURES NOT AVAILABLE		
1888	456 (41%)	661 (59%)	1117
1889	598 (42%)	819 (58%)	1417
1890	658 (42%)	899 (58%)	1557
1891	703 (45%)	862 (55%)	1565
1892	719 (44%)	930 (56%)	1649
1893	832 (42%)	1127 (58%)	1959
1894	925 (43%)	1241 (57%)	2166
<hr/>			
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and only one for boys. By 1887, the first year of the sample, the Society had four homes, providing 128 places for boys, and fourteen homes, providing 290 places for girls in England and Wales. In 1894, the last year of the sample, there were 27 homes , providing 569 places for boys, compared with 38 homes, providing 829 places for girls: although the gap had begun to narrow, the bias towards provision for girls was still marked. It is clear from table 3.3 that these places were all fully utilised.

Compensatory policies had to be offered to children for whom there was no place in a Society home, and these were used notably more often for boys. Children who were accepted for admission but could not be accommodated in the Society's homes were either boarded out or placed in other church homes, known to, and sometimes affiliated with the Waifs and Strays. The drawbacks of placing children in other homes will be considered later. Table 3.3 demonstrates how, for both sexes, the proportion placed outside the Society's care diminished as the Waifs and Strays provision increased.

More revealing, perhaps, are the proportionate figures for boarded-out children, shown on the same table. As I have explained above, it was the Society's policy to board out all children under seven: there was no shortage of foster homes, particularly for girls: the Annual Report for 1885 asserts that:

so far from there being any lack of respectable cottagers thoroughly recommended by the clergy of the parish and willing to receive children at a very moderate rate, it has been impossible (from lack of funds) to supply children (especially little girls) to those who earnestly desire to receive them (86).

TABLE 3.3
PLACEMENTS OF ALL CHILDREN SUPPORTED BY THE WAIFS AND STRAYS SOCIETY
1887-1894
 (Figures extracted from published statistics)

BOYS				
	<u>BOARDED OUT</u>	<u>SOCIETY HOME</u>	<u>OTHER HOME</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
1887	NK	128	NK	NK
1888	172 (38%)	178 (39%)	106 (23%)	456
1889	255 (43%)	201 (33%)	142 (24%)	598
1890	272 (41%)	230 (35%)	156 (24%)	658
1891	252 (36%)	354 (50%)	97 (14%)	703
1892	259 (36%)	380 (53%)	80 (11%)	719
1893	269 (32%)	505 (61%)	58 (7%)	832
1894	272 (29%)	593 (64%)	60 (7%)	925
GIRLS				
	<u>BOARDED OUT</u>	<u>SOCIETY HOME</u>	<u>OTHER HOME</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
1887	NK	313	NK	NK
1888	143 (22%)	415 (63%)	103 (15%)	661
1889	191 (23%)	483 (59%)	145 (18%)	819
1890	212 (23%)	527 (59%)	160 (18%)	899
1891	209 (24%)	531 (62%)	122 (14%)	862
1892	220 (24%)	600 (64%)	110 (12%)	930
1893	268 (24%)	733 (65%)	126 (11%)	1127
1894	268 (22%)	845 (68%)	128 (10%)	1241

Both Dr Barnardo and the boards of guardians responded to similar demands by boarding out proportionately more girls than boys (87); however the Waifs and Strays figures show that boys were consistently more likely to be offered such placements. This may be due in part to the fact that girls who had been rescued from immoral influences were not considered suitable subjects for foster care; prospective foster parents may thus have been persuaded to take a boy, regardless of personal preference. There was also sometimes a particular interest in creating a circle of boarded-out boys: in the 1890s the Rev. Bayley of Effingham arranged for the Society to place five boys in the village in order to establish a church choir (88). However, individual pressures such as this can hardly have influenced the figures to such a degree: the reason more boys were fostered than girls was because only a minimal number could be placed in the Society's homes: in 1887, there were only eight places for boys aged eight and under. As the number of residential places grew, the proportion of boarded-out boys diminished.

Emigration

Just as the links between the executive committee and the purity movement ensured that the Society's policies would be biased towards the rescue of young girls, so did other connections make the establishment of an emigration scheme inevitable.

Part of Canon Erskine Clarke's reply to Rudolf's initial circular has already been quoted. He went on to say: 'If it were a central home to emigrate [the children], on the plan which Miss Rye has so admirably done

and is doing, then I am most ready to help...She has been a splendid and tried worker and has done more for 'Waifs and Strays' of South London than all of us put together'(89, his emphasis).

Maria Rye had originally been involved in the emigration of young women to New Zealand; she began sending parties of children to Canada in 1869. This part of her work, however, appears to have been the subject of considerable controversy. The advertisements soliciting funds to emigrate her first party of children had been countered by a broadsheet produced by George Cruikshank, Dickens' illustrator. He depicted her snatching heartbroken children from parents who were befuddled with drink, in order to found an infant white slave trade (90). In 1875, less emotive criticism came from Andrew Doyle, who had been sent to Canada by the Local Government Board to investigate her work. He claimed that street children were being collected into homes and emigrated with unseemly haste, before their parents could discover their whereabouts. This left little time for training and they arrived in Canada ill-prepared for the heavy farm-work that was required of them. Supervision of emigrants was almost non-existent, and many were abused by their Canadian employers. Doyle also questioned Miss Rye's accounts, and his suspicions have recently been substantiated by Parker's research. Miss Rye had attempted to repudiate Doyle's criticism, and their fairly public disagreement had lasted a couple of years (91).

It is possible that Rudolf was unaware of the controversy surrounding Maria Rye's emigration work. He certainly appears to have approached her, for she replied, reiterating the advice to concentrate on the rescue of

girls. Her organisation was, at least nominally, Anglican, and this may have been the reason why it developed close links with the Waifs and Strays. Initially Rudolf used Maria Rye's agency to emigrate children who came into his care. When she retired in 1896, she transferred her two homes in Peckham and in Niagara to the Society and accepted a place on the Emigration Committee.

As I have indicated in an earlier chapter, emigration was seen by many people to be the panacea for all the problems created by the presence of a destitute underclass. The funding of a juvenile emigration agency for Anglican children does not appear to have been a problem, though the recruitment of suitable foster-parents in non-conformist Canada was another matter. Rudolf's biographer claims that emigration was dear to his heart (92). My evidence does not entirely support this contention (see below). In any case, whatever his own opinion, as in the matter of industrial schools, he had little option but to support a scheme that immediately drew large-scale contributions from subscribers.

Both the Society's Canadian receiving homes were established through single contributions from interested subscribers after whom they were named. Mr Richard Benyon, whose gift of £500 in 1887 founded the Benyon home at Sherbrooke, donated a further £1,000 three years later. Although Benyon does not appear to have taken an active role in the running of the Society, the Gibbs family whose donations secured the other Canadian home, were heavily involved. H.H. Gibbs was a director of the Bank of England and, as Stroud has pointed out, his support lent both respectability and financial credibility to the Society (93). He, his

wife, and two of their adult children all served on the first emigration committee. Another son, the Hon. Vicary Gibbs, supported the Society in other ways and eventually became chairman of the executive. The Rev.K.F.Gibbs was the most actively involved in emigration: he was appointed emigration secretary in 1888. The annual general meeting of that year was chaired by Lord Stanley of Preston who later became governor general of Canada. At least three of the speakers at the meeting (including Gibbs) gave the impression that emigration was a primary aim of the Society (94).

For several years the Rev.Gibbs was diocesan secretary for St Albans as well as serving on the emigration committee. It may have been in this capacity that cases of children referred to the Society were sometimes discussed with him. There is some evidence to suggest that both he and his sister, the Hon.Edith Gibbs, were personally prepared to pay expenses for children whose parents agreed to emigration.

Thomas D.'s stepmother apparently disliked and neglected him. The father was intemperate and on the point of being evicted for non-payment of rent 'and general bad conduct'. Nevertheless it took some persuasion before the local vicar 'at last obtained ... written consent to [his] being sent to Canada'. The referral letter went on to complain that 'Until yesterday argument was in vain, and I fear it is now too late for him to be sent this year'. In 1890, the year that Thomas D. was admitted, the Society appears to have attempted to emphasise its emigration policy. Nevertheless it was rare for voluntary cases to be admitted solely for this purpose

(see Chapter 10 below). The Rev Cotton, who referred the case, does not appear to have considered any other options. This may be because he had previously discussed the matter with Gibbs, who countersigned the application and agreed to pay £3 down plus another £5 when the child left the country. (This particular child remained in England and it looks as though the vicar's wife, whose mother had found him a job, was obliged to pay for his maintenance until discharge) (95).

Jenny B. was six when her father was admitted to Hanwell Asylum, leaving her without a proper guardian. Arrangements had already been made for her to emigrate before her case was referred to the Society by Miss Gibbs. She was admitted to the Marylebone Home on the understanding that she would only be there for six months. Miss Gibbs paid for her maintenance there, and donated £5 towards her emigration expenses (96).

The Gibbs' involvement with individual cases was unusual. The function of the executive was to develop the structure of the Society. It was they who decided what sort of accommodation the Waifs and Strays should provide, and the groups of children for whom it should cater. Nevertheless, as a rule, members of the executive had no direct contact with the children themselves. They might hold the power to accept or refuse their applications for admission, but they were unlikely to meet either children or parents face to face. The responsibility for referring cases and for overseeing the care of individual children was largely decentralised, and delegated to networks of local supporters. They were the people who actually knew the children and their families. Their relationship with the children, the parents and with the Society's

executive will be discussed in some detail in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER FOUR: LOCAL NETWORKS AND THEIR INFLUENCE

Local Networks

From the beginning Rudolf recognised the advantages of using the established structure of the Anglican church as a basis upon which to build his organisation. The Society was planned on diocesan lines, and support was initially sought from the bishops, many of whom served as vice-chairmen or members of the executive committee. At a local level, the individual clergy formed an instantly available network, with over 20,000 potential members spread across the country. This network could be used as a channel for advertising the Society's work, and collecting funds from church members. It could also be used as a referral system for children requiring admission. The involvement of the clergy in the work of the Society was ensured by including in the application form a requirement for a clerical recommendation before any child could be considered for admission.

Although he built upon the clerical structure of the Anglican church, Rudolf recognised that much of the support for his society would come, not from the clergy, but from their congregations. In the late nineteenth century the traditional links between the Anglican church and the aristocracy were perhaps more apparent than they are now, and many of the people involved in the early stages of the Society's development were extremely wealthy and well-connected.

When, in 1881 the Archbishop of Canterbury agreed to become President, he was supported by a long list of vice-presidents, all of whom were

either bishops or members of the aristocracy. The first executive committee of 1882 was composed of eleven clergymen and eleven influential laymen, with the Bishop of Bedford as chairman and Rudolf and his brother as secretaries. Women were not excluded from the executive, but their numbers were always small. When, in 1883, the Society's scope was broadened to include the establishment of a national network of Anglican homes throughout the country, Rudolf recommended that a central committee should be formed in each diocese 'of representative men of position, embracing all parties in the church, the Bishop of the Diocese being invited to become president' (1). The function of each diocesan committee would be to establish and manage two homes, one for girls and one for boys, each to contain about twenty children. The diocesan committees were all answerable to the Society's executive, and it seems from Rudolf's recommendation quoted above, that their composition was expected to be similarly male-dominated.

It was, of course, consonant with the times, to exclude women from all prominent positions and managerial tasks. Nevertheless their traditional role in caring for the poor was well-established. At least one of the early boarding-out committees for poor law children, which were composed of volunteers from a similar background, had resolved this difficulty by arranging for women to visit foster homes and inspect boarded-out children, while their husbands undertook to report back to committee meetings on their behalf (2). Some of the women who formed part of the Anglican membership were extremely wealthy and influential. They also had time on their hands. It would have been unwise as well as wasteful

to ignore them, and Rudolf mobilised their support by creating a network of local secretaries, who were responsible for much of the Society's work. He recommended that these positions could best be filled by ladies. By the time he retired there were over three and a half thousand local secretaries spread throughout England and Wales.

Local secretaries were expected to form branch committees through which the work of the Society might be publicised, and the diocesan committee supported. They were asked to do this by 'sending copies of the magazine to clergy and laity, securing notices in local papers and parish magazines, organising public and drawing room meetings; if possible obtaining offertories for the Society'(3). They organised innumerable fund-raising events such as sales of work, musical evenings and bazaars.

Local secretaries also played a considerable part in the practical work of the Society. It was their job to recruit foster-parents and supervise boarded-out children. They acted as referral agents for local children seeking admission to the Society, and were sometimes responsible for organising and collecting subscriptions for their maintenance. Where there was no separate sub-committee, they were also involved in the management of the local home.

Although the two-tier network of local and diocesan committees proved an effective way of running the Society, it was not easy for the executive to keep such a disparate group under control. The diocesan secretaries held ex officio posts on the executive committee. Some of them were in control of sizeable funds, and could back up a referral with an offer to provide financial support. Chester was one of the four dioceses most supportive

to the Waifs and Strays. During the sample years, S.B.Jacson was its diocesan secretary. He tended to use the executive committee as a means of rubber-stamping local decisions. Fifteen of the sample children came from the Chester diocese. The diocesan committee provided financial support for ten (66%) of these children; in many instances Jacson sent in the application form together with an offer to pay for the child, thereby providing the executive committee with a powerful incentive to accept the case (4).

Diocesan finances could also be used as a reason for adopting a particular course of action: Thomas and Henry R. were admitted in 1890 . Their widowed father had promised to pay two shillings per week for their support, but after only four months he absconded, leaving the Cheshire fund to take over the major part of their maintenance. Three years later, when Henry was twelve, Jacson wrote to Rudolf stating that : 'the Cheshire fund which supports this case being much overdrawn, the committee are anxious that the lad should be sent to Canada.' He enclosed an emigration consent form signed by himself, since the father had disappeared. For reasons that are unclear, the plan fell through, and both boys remained in England (5). Support from the diocese could also work to the child's obvious advantage: it is probably because the Cheshire fund could supplement the maintenance paid by his uncle, that, after admission, George L. was allowed to remain in a foster home in the village in which he had been born, supervised by the woman who had referred his case (6).

Although the Chester diocese used its financial position to influence the executive, during the sample years there appears to have been little

conflict between Jacson and headquarters. The relationship with the diocese of Ripon and Wakefield does not appear to have been so smooth. Ina Stansfeld was appointed Lady Superintendent of the Beckett Home in Leeds in 1885. She became diocesan secretary in 1890 and proceeded to build up enormous support for the Society within her area. Like Chester, Ripon and Wakefield was frequently cited as one of the most generous dioceses. However there are indications that Miss Stansfeld did not find it easy to remain within the guidelines laid down by the executive committee. According to the Society's constitution, it was formally agreed that:

the selection of children to be received shall rest with the executive committee, but that local sub-committees may, in cases of extreme urgency, admit children into the homes on probation for a period of not more than one month, pending the approval of the executive (7).

Twenty-three of the sample children came from the diocese of Ripon and Wakefield. The majority of the applications were sent direct to Miss Stansfeld, who was then expected to pass them on to the executive committee in London. However, on Miss Stansfeld's authority, eight (35%) of the Ripon and Wakefield children were admitted directly to homes in Leeds, sometimes long before their application was considered, let alone agreed, by headquarters. Some of these were clearly not the sort of cases who would normally have proved acceptable: Emily G. and Prudence A. went to Leeds in search of a brother, were found begging, and brought to the St Chad's Home by the local Charity Organisation Society. Emily was twenty-one, and Prudence, seventeen: both well over the Society's normal age-limit. Nevertheless they were admitted pending enquiry; Miss Stansfeld

later wrote to headquarters asking for them to be allowed to remain, on the grounds that a favourable decision would benefit the relationship between the home and the local branch of the Charity Organisation Society. Moreover, they were 'most useful as strong, well-grown girls in the laundry'. Neither of these arguments could be officially classed as acceptable reasons for admission, and there is no record that the executive agreed to ratify the decision. It was probably at their insistence that the girls only remained in the home for three weeks (8).

St Chad's Home, to which these girls were admitted, was intended as a training home for girls who were considered unsuitable for domestic service or emigration. It acted as an auxiliary to all the other Waifs and Strays homes, 'taking from them the failures in service, the weak in health, and the mentally and morally deficient'(9). There was, apparently, no shortage of applications for admission. There is no indication that it was intended as a receiving home for Leeds cases, but this appears to be the use made of it by Miss Stansfeld, who was its matron, as well as being the diocesan secretary. Another sample case was Henry W., one of a family of four children aged from one to eight, all of whom spent ten weeks in St Chad's in 1892, without their case ever being considered by headquarters (10). Another child, Thomas C. was refused by the executive committee and then admitted to St Chad's before the decision was reconsidered (11).

Miss Stansfeld is credited with founding the Ripon and Wakefield branch of the Society. She was related to the politician, James Stansfeld, who was President of the Local Government Board in 1886; she used her

influence and enthusiasm to solicit generous support for the Waifs and Strays from her area. It was through her efforts that the Archbishop of York agreed to become joint president with the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1886. She was also extremely able, eventually rising to chief Lady Inspector of the Local Government Board (12). Nevertheless, the above evidence suggests that she was too much of an individualist to find it easy to abide by the decisions of a committee. Moreover, unlike Chester, Ripon and Wakefield rarely backed up its pressure to accept doubtful cases with financial support. Only two of the children from this diocese were supported by local funds. One cannot help suspecting that the news of her resignation on the approach of her marriage in 1896, was greeted with somewhat mixed feelings.

Although the well-established diocesan committees such as those in Chester or Ripon and Wakefield, wielded considerable power within the Society, and had control of sizeable funds, they appear to have been much harder to set up than the local committees, which grew at a faster rate. By 1890, there were only 17 diocesan secretaries out of a possible total of 32, while 598 local secretaries had been appointed. The local secretaries were intended to be subordinate to those at diocesan level. However, in many areas the diocese was poorly organised, and they were able to act independently, exerting pressure on headquarters to accept their point of view. Whatever the original intention, it soon became clear that most of the people who had sufficient leisure and enthusiasm to devote time to the Society were women. In 1890 they filled almost all the local posts, and just over half of the diocesan positions.

According to Rudolf's biographer, he came to regard the numerous local secretaries who worked indefatigably on his behalf as something of a mixed blessing (13). The evidence from the case-papers provides an explanation for these reservations.

Although all cases of children who applied to the Society for admission had to be accepted by the executive committee, its members rarely if ever had direct contact with them. It was the local secretaries who were most likely to know the children and their parents. Together with the clergy, they were the first line of referral: it was their information which often led to the acceptance or rejection of a particular case. Moreover, they had a dual role. They were not only often involved in referrals, they were also given the job of promoting interest in the Society in their area, and collecting funds. It was this combination of tasks that gave them the opportunity to manipulate the decisions of the executive, a situation which some local secretaries skilfully exploited.

Support was likely to grow if a local child could be seen to have benefited from the Society's involvement. The argument that a particular child's admission would 'make the Society favourably known in the area' was used to support the applications of several of the children in the sample, and was sometimes used to blackmail the executive committee into accepting a doubtful case. Thus William L. who had lost his job through pilfering, came from Tunbridge Wells with the recommendation:

You will I fear think us grasping, but our firm conviction is that we shall double our contributions if we can lay a statement of local cases received before our friends here. Mrs Howard Gill is also very strongly of this opinion from

her experience in Paris. We mean to make a great effort this autumn to increase our subscriptions...and it is absolutely impossible in this place where several other similar societies flourish to get a hearing unless we shew that we are a direct boon to the place! (14)

When Minnie G., whose widowed mother was too ill to earn a living, was refused admission on the grounds that her elder siblings would be able to maintain her with the help of outdoor relief, the local secretary wrote:

You must allow me to add that the rejection of a case...which we sent up this month after thorough investigation, by your committee, has very much damped my zeal for your society. There are few small towns which do as much for the society as Stratford, and it is annoying to find our first case rejected. We have contributed to the funds very much more than the keep of one child. The natural conclusion is that we shall keep our money and send the child to some paying institution (15).

Five days later the case was accepted; within the month a vacancy had been found in the local home in Leamington Spa!

Local secretaries and the committees for individual homes could also be protective towards individual children. The homes committees sometimes insisted on interviewing parents to ascertain their respectability before agreeing to a discharge (16). When such a decision was made by the executive it was sometimes queried at local level by people who could justifiably claim to have a greater knowledge of the families involved. Frederick M's discharge home was unsuccessfully opposed by the local committee whose secretary claimed that his father:

is (or has been) a drunken and immoral man, and when the boy earned a few halfpence would take them away from him. Our chief object in putting him under the care of the society was to remove him from his father, and I am sure those who are paying for him only agreed to do so on the understanding that his father could not get him back (17).

She went on to suggest that Rudolf could invoke the 1891 Custody of

Children Act to prevent Frederick from returning to his father.

The homes committees probably knew the children better than those who had simply been involved in their referral. The ladies committee of the girls home at Harrow believed that 'by the idea of the Society' they replaced the girls' families and acted accordingly (18). When Edith B. was sixteen and about to leave her second unsatisfactory job, Rudolf told the committee for the Harrow home that the Society could no longer take responsibility for her: 'the time has arrived when there is no alternative but to return her to her mother, who, from enquiries made, is married and, although somewhat poor, is respectable.' In reply, the secretary for the home pointed out that Edith's mother had had two illegitimate children and been in prison for throwing vitriol at her lover. She had also been in considerable arrears with her maintenance payments. Even if Rudolf's facts were correct, 'a woman who, so short a time ago bore such a character, can hardly be fit to take a young girl'. The home committee 'do not feel they can take any responsibility in sending her out of our care to what we fully believe would be very bad for her.' Rudolf was persuaded to keep her for a further year, but eventually decided there was no alternative but to send her home. The Harrow committee again reacted angrily, and wrote to both Rudolf and Edith, promising that they would never give her up. They appear to have kept their word, and persuaded Rudolf to pay for a further admission to a training home when she was eighteen. Although he refused further help, the Harrow secretary was able to write in 1904, that Edith, now aged twenty, had been 'doing much better lately' (19).

Broadly speaking, the executive committee shaped overall policies by

deciding on the type of children to admit and the forms of care to be provided, while most of the influence at local level came from pressures like those indicated above, which were all intimately related to individual children.

The Severance Lobby

It is clear that there were many people at all levels of the Society who wholeheartedly endorsed policies designed to sever the relationship between the children in its care and their parents. The close involvement of active members of the executive with the purity movement and with the emigration of juveniles must have encouraged this point of view. Active members of the Society at local level would have been aware of the contemporary debate; many of them may well have belonged to local branches of rescue societies such as the Associations for the Care of Friendless Girls. There is some evidence to suggest that the local groups of supporters who, after all, had closer contacts with the parents, were more likely to be in favour of severance than the executive. In almost all of the cases in which a request for a child's discharge to parents or relations was opposed by the Society, the objections came from the local committees rather than from the executive. In fact, there were several cases such as those of Frederick M. and Edith B. above, in which local committees objected to a decision from headquarters to send a child home; as far as I am aware, there was only one instance in which a decision to retain a child was similarly queried (20).

The need for severance was particularly endorsed by the Reformatory and

Refuge Union, a powerful national organisation whose connections with the Waifs and Strays Society were reinforced by the latter's acquisition of a string of industrial schools. The Rev.Thomas Turner, who represented the Union in a deputation to the Home Secretary in 1888, also served on the emigration committee of the Waifs and Strays.

The Reformatory and Refuge Union provided a forum for the rescue agencies. The managers of industrial schools were well-represented in this society, through which they regularly voiced the complaint that the early legislation had failed to give them sufficient power over committed children. In their opinion, the Industrial Schools Acts were rendered ineffective because parents could regain custody as soon as the child reached sixteen. The whole purpose of the training was nullified when children of both sexes could be reclaimed by criminal and immoral parents who would proceed to reintroduce them to their former lives. At sixteen, adolescents were capable of earning respectable wages, and parents were popularly thought to have only a mercenary interest in re-establishing the relationship. The Union lobbied for an extension of powers over committed children. It was instrumental in promoting the Industrial Schools Acts of 1891 and 1894. The former allowed the managers of industrial schools to emigrate committed children or place them in the forces without requiring parental consent. The latter extended the period of committal until the child reached eighteen, as long as he consented (21).

The Rev.Horsley's association with the Waifs and Strays, the purity movement and the Reformatory and Refuge Union, has already been mentioned.

In 1888, he was invited to read a paper on 'The Working of the Industrial Schools Act Amendment Act ' to the conference of the managers of the reformatories and industrial schools. At the end of this he brought forward the following motion which was carried unanimously:

That this conference respectfully asks the Home Secretary to draw the attention of all chief constables to the necessity of the Industrial Schools Act Amendment Act being more vigorously enforced; to the need of more Certified Schools, which shall receive exclusively girls coming from the conditions specified in the Act; and to the great importance of continuing the parental rights of the Managers of Industrial Schools until the children attain the age of at least eighteen years (22).

Eight years later, his evidence to the Mundella Committee makes it clear that he endorsed many of the other arguments in favour of increasing powers over committed children that have been detailed above. In fact, he extended the argument to include pauper children, claiming that poor law guardians should assume parental rights over children who 'perversely would not be orphans' the moment they became chargeable (23).

The case-papers also indicate that some local committees exerted pressure on the executive to adopt a more forceful policy of severance. Particular objections were raised to the reluctance shown by headquarters to emigrate children without parental consent. In 1894 the local secretary for Bournemouth wrote to Rudolf on the subject. His letter reiterates so many of the other arguments in favour of severance detailed above that it is worth quoting at some length:

Seven boys of the Talbot [Home] might have been emigrated, but in six cases the 'next of kin' have objected, so I enclose the medical certificate of only one boy...whose nearest relative, a sister, is little older than himself and not competent to advise him. ...Might I ask why the nearest of kin, when the parents are dead, should be allowed to

interfere. Emigration is admitted to be a solution of the social problem of 'overpopulation' and 'the unemployed'. It also severs 'Waifs and Strays' from their former evil surroundings. Why then should relations for their own selfish reasons or fancies be allowed to interfere?

It appears that the parents and relations allow the society to bring up their children until they arrive at a money earning age and then claim the right to dispose of them for their own, and not for the children's advantage.

Could not a contract be made when first the society took charge of the children? The parent or guardian giving up the right to interfere conditionally on the society paying all expenses in bringing up the children - and engaging to repay all expenses if he or she did subsequently interfere. The C.E.A. (? Catholic Emigration Association) make some such contract and I was told by one of the sisters that practically it answered very well and they did what they liked with their children without any interference from parents and next of kin.

In two of the Talbot Home cases the aunts of the boys have objected to emigration - and if employment cannot be found for them they will be thrown back at some time or other among their old surroundings at a critical age before they have got strength of mind to resist evil...(24)

Similar views were expressed by the diocesan secretary for Exeter in the case of Mary C. Her father was required to sign a form consenting to emigration before she was admitted to the Society; she was (probably deliberately) placed at some distance from her home town, in one of the Society's girl's homes, where the matron intercepted a letter from her father objecting to the proposed emigration and threatening to take further proceedings if his wishes were ignored. The father claimed that he had not understood the implications of the original consent form, and indeed he had taken the precaution of signing his name with a cross, although the later letter suggests he was literate. The diocesan secretary felt that the father should be held to his original agreement, especially as discharge 'would mean ruin to the child' (25).

Mary C.'s father won his battle with the Exeter committee, and his

daughter remained in England. He was by no means the only relative whose objection to emigration was sustained (26). Other parents successfully sought their children's discharge, often, as in the case of Frederick M. above, against the wishes of Society officials. The nature of the severance policies adopted by the Waifs and Strays will be studied in some detail in Chapter 10. It is worth noting here that, in spite of all the support for severance and the related policy of emigration, both at local level and amongst members of the executive, a surprising number of children eventually returned home. Only 43 (11%) of the sample children were sent to Canada. Of these, 10 were admitted directly from other organisations in order to join emigration parties; they spent no time in the Society's care in Britain; 107 (27%) of the sample children were reunited with parents or other relatives.

Not all individual members of the Society were in favour of severance. Although the public debate had largely concentrated on weighing up the relative merits of the boarding-out system versus residential care, there had always been a small group of dissenters who questioned the assumption that deprived and neglected children needed to be separated from their families at all. A generation before Rudolf founded the Waifs and Strays, Sheriff Watson and Alexander Thomson had opened the Aberdeen Industrial Feeding Schools. These schools were established on the principle that 'the family is the place ordained and prepared by God for the training and upbringing of children, and this is an ordinance which men can never infringe with impunity' (27): the destitute children who attended them

received comprehensive day-care, academic and industrial instruction, and regular meals every day of the week, but they returned home to their parents each evening. Experience had proved that 'the cases where evil results from the children returning home are very rare'. By combining regular contact with parents together with strict religious and academic instruction, the schools claimed to have enabled children to 'distinguish between the tares and the wheat'. There had also been 'most cheering instances' where children from the schools had successfully acted as missionaries to their families (28).

Both Watson and Thomson argued that it was both unnecessary and wrong to separate deprived children entirely from their parents. They had played an influential part in the establishment of the early industrial schools, but the tide of opinion had turned against them. Later managers of the industrial schools were amongst the most vociferous proponents of severance policies. Nevertheless, throughout the period under scrutiny there was a steady undercurrent of dissent to severance, initially from those who favoured the Aberdeen system and from the Ragged Schools Union, and towards the end of the century, from the NSPCC, and the Home Office under Harcourt (29).

Amongst the more influential members of the Waifs and Strays executive, Miss A.L.Lee (see above p.100) was firmly convinced that many children were unnecessarily removed from their parents. In 1883 she wrote to the Society's magazine claiming that the reason poor children living in the community were 'vastly superior in health, appearance, vivacity, and intelligence' to those in pauper institutions, was 'because, even in the

most wretched homes, social and family affections are not dried up. someone cares for the children, if only to scold them. They have a home, they are relations of someone'(30).

In a later article Miss Lee claimed that where girls were committed to industrial schools against the wishes of their parents, the outcomes were invariably unsatisfactory. This contention was supported by illustrations from ten cases of girls who had willingly returned to their parents - or made efforts to do so - after a period of committal to industrial school. Many had resented the separation and had been seen as disruptive elements within the schools: R.E. who was 'as indignant at being 'put away' as her mother was at losing her' had to be transferred twice. Eventually, 'after causing the resignation of matrons, and the discomforture of Committee members, leave was obtained for her to be returned to her parents before she reached 16 years of age'. Miss Lee concluded that public money had been spent on all these girls to no avail, for all had returned to the type of lives they would have been expected to lead had there been no separation. She claimed that the only way to help such children was to work in conjunction with the parents. If efforts were made to preserve the relationship between parent and child through the facilitation of contacts, neither party would feel it necessary to seize the first available opportunity to reject the training provided by the industrial schools. Some children were frightened to return home, and in these cases there was no viable relationship, but 'where the parental tie does exist, no matter how bad we may think the parents to be, it is only through using it, and acting with it, and through it, that success in our work can be

expected' (31).

However, it is unlikely that the influence of Miss Lee and other, like-minded, supporters of the Society would have been sufficient to counteract the weight of opinion in favour of severance policies. I suggest that the clue to the apparent gulf between opinion and action lies in the character of Rudolf himself.

Edward de Montjoie Rudolf

One of the most striking features of the Waifs and Strays Society is the anonymity of its founder. Barnardo, Stephenson, Fegan, Quarrier, Middlemore, and many others, gave their names to the organisations which they created, and thereby acquired a measure of recognition. Edward de Montjoie Rudolf drew up a scheme to establish a Church of England Central Home for Waifs and Strays in 1881, and then as secretary, spent the next thirty-eight years running the society which emerged. By the time he retired in 1919 it had acquired 113 homes, and was caring for 4,531 children. Throughout England and Wales a network of 3,672 local secretaries were working on the Society's behalf. Its income for that year was almost a quarter of a million pounds. Yet Rudolf himself does not appear to have been widely known; today his name is scarcely recognised. It is significant that Edward Rudolf House, the Society's present headquarters, only adopted its commemorative title in 1985.

Rudolf had the opportunity to become a prominent leader such as Barnardo. However he appears to have preferred to remain in the background. He resisted an early attempt to call the Society 'Mr Rudolf's

Homes' and it was against his wishes that the executive described him publicly as 'Honorary Secretary and Founder' (32). His reluctance to assume overt control of the Society may well have ensured its continuing existence, for in the absence of a charismatic leader, the Waifs and Strays became closely identified with the Church of England,- a much more durable organisation than any he might have founded independently.

Although Rudolf avoided the limelight, he nevertheless was in control of the Society's administration from 1885 until 1919. By remaining in the background he may indeed have been able to exert a greater, more subtle, influence over the Society's affairs than if he had been seen as an autocratic leader. It is not clear how many decisions about individual children he had to refer to the executive committee, but it seems likely that in his position as secretary and founder of the Society he had the autonomy to make many himself. Almost all the letters from headquarters on the case-files are signed by Rudolf himself: only those which refer to the admission of particular children or to the arrangements for their maintenance appear to convey decisions made in committee. It seems probable that the many other letters sent to parents and local committees together with the meticulous attention to administrative procedure, reflect the opinions of Rudolf himself.

As Stroud points out, Rudolf had been a first class civil servant, and this was reflected in the way in which the Society was run (33). The case-papers reveal the existence of innumerable forms and lists of regulations. During the eight years from which the sample was taken, at least six different application forms were in use. There were also foster

parent agreements, notices of discharge or transfer and service after-care reports. Children were not accepted for emigration until the superintendents of their homes had submitted a formal parental consent, a character reference and a detailed certificate of health.

It seems likely that these forms were drawn up by Rudolf himself. Their function was to enable those at headquarters to keep a tight rein on the work at local level, thus ensuring the creation of an overall policy. Many after-care reports have either been lost or were never completed. All the other forms were used consistently, thus providing the Waifs and Strays executive with a wealth of information about the children. Only four of the sample case-papers contain no formal application for admission. When private homes were transferred to the Society complete with inmates, the matron was required to fill in a new application form for each child, even if admission had taken place several years previously. Miss Stansfeld was obliged to complete batches of application forms for children who had been admitted without authority, even though some had already been discharged (34).

The plethora of forms was accompanied by lists of rules and regulations. In 1886 a written constitution was formally agreed; it appears to have been followed. In addition, there were rules for the executive (35), rules for the guidance of local committees, (36) regulations to be observed in boarding out children (37), rules for the placement of children in service (38), standing orders for affiliation to the Society (39) and so on. Circular letters were sent out to the homes updating them on policies: in 1899, for instance, Rudolf sent a

letter to the homes committees urging them to remain in contact with girls who had left for service 'by treating them to letters and possibly at times, to presents' (40).

The attention given to the bureaucratic workings of the Society suggests that Rudolf considered regulations were important. This is also reflected in his obvious reluctance to adopt some of the more devious practices by which parents of children entering the nineteenth century voluntary societies were commonly deprived of their rights. The Waifs and Strays' early admissions forms contained a contract similar to those used by Dr Barnardo and Dr Stephenson's Home. This included a clause allowing the Society to reclaim the amount spent on a child's maintenance throughout the period of care, from parents who insisted on a premature discharge. Given the financial circumstances of the parents, this must have acted as an effective deterrent to reclamation. As has previously been indicated, these forms are not present among the case-papers for children admitted to the Waifs and Strays after 1884 and were probably discarded, though they may have been stored separately. In any case, the clause demanding reimbursement from parents whose claim for discharge was opposed by the Society, was incorporated into the 1891 Custody of Children Act. Thus, whether or not the sample parents signed admissions contracts, from 1891 onwards those who sought premature discharge could have been required to reimburse costs. Thirty-six of the sample children returned home at their relatives's request before they reached fourteen; almost all of these discharges were opposed either by headquarters or by local committees. Yet in none of these cases were relatives forced to renounce

their claim by the use of this type of legalised financial blackmail.

Similar scruples are evident in the Society's policy over emigration. Initially the Waifs and Strays adopted the same arrangements as Barnardo's and Dr Stephenson's Home, and required parents who sought entry to agree to the child's being placed anywhere in either the United Kingdom or the Colonies. This effectively meant that all parents were obliged to agree to the possibility of emigration and the permanent severance that this entailed as a condition of admission.

Thus in 1885, those who referred children to the Waifs and Strays were asked:

Are the child's parents, guardians or next of kin, willing to sign an agreement to commit it wholly to the care of the managers of the Home, to obey the rules in force and to permit the said child when fully trained to be sent to any situation in the United Kingdom or the Colonies which may be obtained for it by the Committee? (41)

In 1887, however, the Society introduced a new form, in which these clauses were divided. One question was identical to that quoted above except that the words 'or the Colonies' were now omitted. In addition, referrers were now separately asked: 'Is there any objection to its being emigrated if this is thought to be desirable by the Society?' (42). It was thus now possible for Waifs and Strays parents to agree to placement in the United Kingdom, but to refuse consent to emigration. The considerable use made of this alternative and the extent to which parents' views were respected will be considered in some detail in a later chapter.

Decisions about individual children also reflect a degree of integrity in the Society's dealings with parents that is at odds with both the declared views of some of the more influential supporters and with what

appears to have been fairly common practice by other organisations. Barnardo's philanthropic abductions of Roman Catholic children became causes celebres at the time, and have since been well-documented (43). The Waifs and Strays case of Jane N., quoted in the previous chapter, might well have become just such another struggle between Protestant and Catholic philanthropists. The Sunday School Union, which had the care of Jane's two sisters, was planning 'to resist all attempts to remove [them] to a Catholic institution'; the president and vice-president of the Roman Catholic Society were demanding custody of Jane. In the event, as previously stated, the case was resolved by the father's capitulation. However before this happened the Waifs and Strays had already made a decision: Rudolf wrote across his letter from the local secretary for the Hull Home: 'sanctioned girl being given up', and presumably Jane would have been released to the Catholic society had her father not unexpectedly changed his mind (44).

The first case referred to the Society demonstrates further how Rudolf was prepared to resist pressure from others in upholding the rights of relatives. Isabella Baldwin (also known as Emma Irving) was placed by Rudolf in Miss Rye's emigration home in 1882. Soon after her arrival there one of Miss Rye's associates wrote to Rudolf claiming that 'two dreadful women' had appeared at the home and demanded to see Isabella. This had been refused on the grounds that Rudolf's authorisation was required. According to the informant, the women were 'bent on having [Isabella] back' and were 'determined that she shall not go to Canada'. Under the circumstances a visit was considered unwise. Later letters pointed out

that it was Miss Rye's policy only to allow the children's friends or relations to visit them once before emigration, and 'if they are immoral people we do not allow them to see the children at all'. These particular women, who claimed to have been brought up as Isabella's sisters for more than fourteen years, had not only been refused all access, but Miss Rye had also forbidden Isabella to write to them, and had concealed from them the date of her departure. Miss Rye was extremely well-known and, as already indicated, highly thought of by many Waifs and Strays supporters. For Rudolf to risk antagonising her over his very first case must have seemed politically unwise. Nevertheless, in spite of her opposition, he arranged for these relatives to visit on two occasions before embarkation (45).

The suggestion that it was Rudolf who acted as a moderating influence on some of the more extreme views of his supporters is reinforced by his connection with the NSPCC. The London branch of this society was opened in 1884, with Benjamin Waugh and Edward Rudolf as joint secretaries. The philosophy of the NSPCC was very different from that of many of the other nineteenth century voluntary child care organisations. Although Barnardo resigned from the committee in 1890 on the grounds that the Society was becoming too heavily influenced by the Roman Catholics (46), the NSPCC was in fact non-denominational. By distancing itself from the contemporary sectarian struggle, the society avoided the most potent argument in favour of severance: that children needed to be permanently separated from their parents in order to preserve the faith they learned from the rescue societies. Instead, the executive considered its primary task to be that

of reawakening parental instincts among those who were entrusted with the care of children. It was one of the few voluntary children's societies to follow Alexander Thomson's lead and refuse to adopt a policy of severance: its annual report for 1886 stated:

...your Society is not a society for separating children from their parents...Ideal surroundings may be very fine in theory, and doubtless there are cases where the so-called home is simply intolerable; but in the great bulk of our cases we deem it best family life should continue to be maintained (47)

This conclusion may well have been reached for pragmatic reasons. The NSPCC could provide temporary shelter for children in an emergency, but it never possessed permanent accommodation in which to place those who were separated. The society's own experiences may well have discouraged the use of residential care: in its first nine months the London branch dealt with '95 cases of cruelty involving 175 domestic victims, besides a much larger number in public institutions' (48, my emphasis).

Moreover, in 1884, when the main London branch was founded, there was no legal machinery for removing children permanently from their parents' custody. One or two judges were prepared to anticipate changes in the law: in 1888 the NSPCC was able to place William and Alfred S. in the care of the Waifs and Strays, their father having agreed to renounce his right to custody in exchange for a more lenient sentence (49). However, in most cases, there was every chance that children would have to live with parents who had been prosecuted, and even imprisoned for their ill-treatment. In its first year the NSPCC set up a committee of disposal to supervise families which had been reunited following a parent's release from prison. By the end of the century it was able to offer such families

at least six months supervision; some continued to receive advice and assistance for several years (50). Thus from the very beginning the NSPCC's officials were obliged to work with parents for, at least until new legislation was passed, there was little opportunity of excluding them. The NSPCC were thus more closely involved with parents than most of the major rescue organisations. Familiarity bred a much greater understanding and tolerance of their shortcomings.

Although the NSPCC had frequent recourse to the courts, its executive was well aware that many cruel parents were not deliberately unkind:

with such persons [the law] is our last [resort]; they are scarcely yet bad-intentioned people. Poisonous influences around them have lulled the parental instinct, and official notice, with the possibility of a turn at the treadmill, has a decided tendency to arouse it (51).

Unless parents were suspected of committing serious offences, the society preferred to rely on a system of formal warnings, and 'moral influence'. It never appears to have prosecuted in more than about a fifth of cases. Even after the 1889 Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act was passed, making it possible to transfer custody to 'fit persons' the NSPCC continued to have recourse to supervision rather than severance : between 1889 and 1903, less than 1% of the children on whose behalf the society intervened were removed from their parents (52).

Although Waugh became the driving force behind the society, Rudolf continued his active involvement until 1890. His main role was to oversee the accounts, but he was also involved in collecting information which could be used as propaganda to campaign for changes in the law (53). Rudolf resigned as secretary to the NSPCC when he began to work full-time

for the Waifs and Strays in 1890, but the links between the two societies were preserved. The Waifs and Strays continued to advertise in the NSPCC journal. Arrangements were made to admit urgent Waifs and Strays cases to the NSPCC shelter in Harpur street. Many of those NSPCC children who were separated from their parents were accommodated by the Waifs and Strays. Eight of the sample children were referred by the NSPCC, while a further six were known to officials of the society.

As will be seen in later chapters, the sample does contain cases where parents were denied access to their children, and where applications for premature discharge were refused. One or two children were emigrated without parental consent, and in other cases very little effort was made to find absentee relations. A few of the children were illegally adopted; in at least one of the sample cases this was attempted in direct opposition to the relatives' wishes. However there is evidence that in the Waifs and Strays Society, at least some attempt was made to resist the temptation to ignore the rights of parents. A more moderate approach was probably a characteristic of Rudolf himself, and may well have been reinforced by his involvement with the NSPCC. Barnardo stated openly that he considered his work was of an importance that transcended the law (54). The NSPCC was primarily an agency for enforcing and updating the law, and his involvement with this organisation may have made Rudolf particularly conscious of the legality of his actions. His evidence to the Mundella Committee was largely confined to the ways in which the law could be used to protect his children from unsuitable parents (55). Rudolf was prepared to use the laws that were being passed during this

period; however it is probably due to his fair-mindedness that the considerable pressures from those of his supporters who were in favour of exceeding the legal mandate and denying parents their rights, were relatively ineffective.

CHAPTER FIVE: PARISH LADIES AND PATRONAGE

Referrers

Contemporary publicity material for all the voluntary societies claimed that the child rescue movement arose in response to an urban problem. The children in need of care were the waifs and strays of the city streets. Their poverty and neglect were often ascribed to the appalling conditions and hopelessness of life in the slums (1). According to the 1891 Census, there were six cities in England and Wales with populations of over 250,000, of which the largest was London, with over 4,000,000 inhabitants (2). On the basis of the above theory, one would expect the children admitted to the Waifs and Strays Society to have been largely drawn from these major cities. Table 5.1 shows the size of the towns of origin for the sample children. Although about a third (33%) of the children came from the six largest cities, almost as many (29%) were received from very small towns or villages where the population was less than 10,000. If the figures are further broken down, this anomaly becomes even more striking. The Society had originally been established in London, as a central home for receiving destitute children; its headquarters remained there, and for these reasons as well as the widespread poverty, one might expect a large number of children to come from this area. This was indeed the case, and 99 (26%) of the sample children came from London. However only 28 (7%) came from the other major cities where the social conditions were reputed to be equally unsatisfactory. On the other hand, 56 (14%) children came from towns of

TABLE 5.1
 SIZE OF TOWNS FROM WHICH WAIFS AND STRAYS CHILDREN WERE ADMITTED.
 (Waifs and Strays sample data 1887-1894 plus 1891 census figures).

	<u>NUMBERS ADMITTED</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
<u>POPULATION OF TOWN</u>		
250,000+	127	33.2
100,000-249,999	30	7.8
50,000-99,999	14	3.7
20,000-49,999	62	16.2
10,000-19,999	35	9.1
under 10,000	113	29.5
received from abroad	2	.5
	<hr/>	
TOTALS	383	100.00
Not known	17	
	<hr/>	

less than 3,000 inhabitants, and of these, 24 were from villages where the population was less than 1,000. The percentages do not markedly change if one removes from the calculations the 29 children who were in homes that were transferred to the Waifs and Strays during the sample years.

It may, of course, be possible that the Society had uncovered a vast extent of rural deprivation which had previously passed unnoticed. Certainly, some of the sample cases reveal that conditions in a village could be appalling. However there is no evidence to suggest that the prevalence of rural poverty in any way equalled that in the towns, as would have been the case if the admissions figures reflected the extent of need. The probable explanation is that the figures are more indicative of the prevalence of the Society's supporters than of the extent of deprivation in any area.

The sample children were admitted to the Society from every diocese in England and Wales except for the smallest, Sodor and Man. Table 5.2 shows the ten dioceses which yielded the largest number of admissions, and compares them with the ten most populous dioceses according to the census figures. Although the diocese of London was both the most populous and produced the highest number of admissions, it is obvious that elsewhere the distribution of admissions bore little relationship to the size of population in each diocese. In 1891 the six largest cities in England and Wales were London, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds and Sheffield. Yet the dioceses of Liverpool and Manchester only yielded ten and seven admissions respectively. These data confirm the evidence from table 5.1, that outside London, the rate of admissions corresponded more

TABLE 5.2
TEN DIOCESES WITH GREATEST FREQUENCIES OF WAIFS AND STRAYS ADMISSIONS
 (1891 Census and Waifs and Strays sample 1887-1894: 400 cases)

<u>DIOCESE</u>	<u>FREQUENCY OF ADMISSIONS</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE OF W&S ADMISSIONS</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION</u>
London	82	20.5	11.1
Rochester	50	12.3	6.6
Winchester	25	6.3	3.0
Ripon and Wakefield	24	6.0	6.0
Norwich	21	5.3	2.4
Canterbury	18	4.5	2.6
Lichfield	16	4.0	4.1
Chester	15	3.8	2.5
St Albans	14	3.5	3.5
York	12	3.0	5.0
OTHERS	103	25.2	
TOTALS	400	100.0	100.0

TEN MOST POPULOUS DIOCESES
 (1891 Census figures)

<u>DIOCESE</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION</u>
London	11.1
Manchester	9.1
Rochester	6.6
Ripon and Wakefield	6.0
York	5.0
Worcester	4.2
Liverpool	4.1
Lichfield	4.1
Durham	3.5
St Albans	3.5
OTHERS	42.8
TOTAL	100.0

closely to the extent of local interest in the Society than to the prevalence of need. The high number of referrals from Ripon and Wakefield could be at least as dependent upon the appointment of Ina Stansfeld as diocesan secretary as upon the presence of Leeds within the diocese. Moreover, this evidence further supports the suggestion that referrals were bound up with the role of the gentry in rural society: in Devon and Cornwall, Wales and the Northern Borders, land tended to be distributed amongst smaller independent farmers, while the great estates of the landed gentry covered the Midlands, East Anglia and the South. As might be expected, the four Welsh dioceses, together with Exeter, Truro, Carlisle, Durham and Newcastle all yielded particularly low numbers of referrals.

Some of the individual cases cited in the previous chapter, where children were admitted to further the interests of the Society in a particular area, might lend support to this argument. Further evidence can be found by looking more closely at the type of people who referred cases. Table 5.3 shows the different routes through which children entered the Society.

The clergy, who, together with the local committees, were expected to provide the route through which children could enter the Society, countersigned the applications in 264 (66%) of the cases, but they were the prime movers in only 73 (18%) of them. People who had an established connection with the Waifs and Strays, such as diocesan and local secretaries or members of the executive, referred a further 66 (17%) cases. Most of the children were referred by outside agencies in both the statutory and the voluntary sector, or by private individuals to whom

TABLE 5.3
PEOPLE WHO SUCCESSFULLY REFERRED CHILDREN TO THE WAIFS AND STRAYS
(Waifs and Strays sample data 1887-1894; 395 cases)

<u>REFERRER</u>	<u>NUMBERS ADMITTED</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
<u>OFFICIAL ROUTE</u>		
Clergy	73	18.5
Waifs and Strays associate	66	16.7
<u>STATUTORY AGENCY</u>		
Poor Law	24	6.1
Courts, School Board, Police etc	21	5.3
<u>VOLUNTARY AGENCY</u>		
C.O.S.	8	2.0
N.S.P.C.C.	8	2.0
Rescue Organisations	18	4.6
Residential Children's Homes	13	3.3
Missions	11	2.8
Other Voluntary Organisations	16	4.0
<u>RELATIVES, FRIENDS AND WELLWISHERS</u>		
Parent	2	0.5
Child	1	0.2
Other Relative	7	1.8
Parent's Employer/Landlord	14	3.5
Parish Lady	109	27.6
Other People Known to Parent	4	1.0
<hr/>		
TOTALS:	395	100
Not known	5	
<hr/>		

they were personally known.

Forty-five children were referred by statutory agencies such as the courts, the school boards and the police. Included in this group are the 24 children who were referred by poor law officials, and the majority of those who were committed to industrial schools.

Seventy-four children were admitted at the request of voluntary agencies. They came from nearly forty separate voluntary bodies, as disparate as the Church of England Temperance Society (four referrals) and the Rifleman's Aid Society (two referrals). Some of these, such as the Charity Organisation Society and the NSPCC, both of which submitted eight referrals, had well-documented links with the Waifs and Strays. A further eighteen children in this group were referred by local branches of the rescue organisations such as the Ladies Associations for the Care of Friendless Girls and the Diocesan Councils for Rescue, which were closely tied to both the Waifs and Strays and the Church of England. The Friendless Girls Home at Hull, and the Diocesan Rescue Home at Winchester were both established by local branches of these organisations, and later transferred to the Waifs and Strays.

Fourteen other children in this group were referred by Anglican sisterhoods, deaconess institutions and missions. Some of these children, such as William R., whose widowed mother died of consumption ten days after he was admitted, were referred as a result of the sisters' work amongst the families of the poor (3). Many of these sisterhoods were autonomous bodies, acting within the Church, but independently of the local clergy. Some of them ran their own orphanages and homes for fallen

women: the Society developed a close link with the Community of St John the Baptist, who not only referred cases, but also received several Waifs and Strays children into their own orphanage at Clewer (4). The Netherton Home in the diocese of Newcastle had been placed under the management of another Anglican sisterhood before it was transferred to the Society (5).

Another group who were admitted at the request of voluntary agencies were the eleven children referred from other residential homes. Some of these were adolescents who were referred to the Society by organisations which did not possess adequate facilities for training or emigration (6). Others had been admitted temporarily to private homes pending an application to the Waifs and Strays (7). There were also four children in this group who had been transferred from secure residential placements either because the home in which they had been placed closed down or because, by the age of eight, they had outgrown it. The unreliability of some of the privately run homes will be discussed later in this chapter.

The most interesting group of referrers were the children's relatives, friends and wellwishers. Only ten cases were referred by parents, relatives or children themselves, though they helped provide information in a further 76 instances. One hundred and nine children (28%), the largest group in either this or any other category, were referred by ladies who were involved in Church work amongst the poor. Several of them were the wives or relatives of the clergy; apart from this they had no known connection with any organisation. Most of them were from the same social group who became local secretaries for the Society, or who

acted as sponsors for the children in its care. They came from the same background as the women who worked for other voluntary agencies such as the Ladies Associations for the Care of Friendless Girls. In fact there was considerable overlap between these groups : together they formed a formidable army of 'parish ladies' whose influence, attitudes and assumptions need to be considered in some detail.

Parish Ladies

Unlike the Bible women who furthered the work of the Methodist agencies, the parish ladies in the Waifs and Strays Society came from a markedly superior social class to the children with whom they were involved. Several of them were titled; the addresses of many others were obviously those of the local, rural gentry. The first committee of St Nicholas' Home in Tooting was composed of: The Dowager Lady de Clifford, Sarah, Lady Harlech, The Hon. Mrs Bulkeley-Owen, Lord Kenyon, Mrs (later Lady) Salt, The Hon. Edith Gibbs, and Miss Duncombe (8).

The social position and wealth of the Society's supporters was recognised in articles such as the following appeal for funds for the Cold Ash home, which had developed a cottage industry to supplement its income:

Those who are about to spend £50 on a new pug, £80 on a 'Devon Punch' [pointer], £365 on a new lace flounce for a ball dress, or £1,000 on a hunter, please remember us; and believe me, your money will be well spent. Please do not say that you only gave £75 for that scrap of Crown Derby, when we are doing our utmost to turn an honest penny out of a few pots of jam and servants' mob-caps (9).

In fact, the social position of the Waifs and Strays was seen as a drawback to the collection of funds. In 1891, the spectacular success of

General Booth's attempts to raise money to set up his 'Darkest England' scheme, caused the Society to consider why the public appeared to be so much more generous to its competitors. Throughout the year letters and comments such as the following appeared in the monthly magazine:

Can you explain why the Church of England can very seldom raise £3,000 in a month for the support of such an institution as the Homes for Waifs and Strays while Dr. Barnardo more than doubles that sum? Quarrier, of Glasgow, has only to ask for £4,000 or £5,000 for some special object in his wonderful work, and he obtains it in a few days; to say nothing of Muller of Bristol, Spurgeon, etc. Have other churches or denominations more faith, more zeal, or more liberality than ours? (10) .

The reply, published and commented on three months later, was that 'the Society is supported only by the 'gentry' whilst other workers are helped by 'all classes' (11).

Although not all the Society's supporters were as aristocratic as the above might suggest, many of those who were involved in the independent referral of children came from the upper end of the social scale. Their role within the Society was an obvious extension of the part they played in village life.

The influence of the rural gentry in nineteenth century village life has been well-documented. Mills describes how, even at the end of the century, in a closed village, where virtually all the land belonged to the local squire, and there were few, if any, independent freeholders, the estate owner could exert enormous control over his tenants. Not only was he the local landlord, he was also the main source of employment. Mills cites as a particular example the Lockinge estate, owned by Lord Wantage, and, in the 1870s, covering over 20,000 acres of Berkshire. Like many

other landowners, Lord Wantage provided the initiative for all the social services on his estate: he was in control of the savings bank, the allotment scheme, the reading room, the village cooperative society, and the public house. More significantly, he had built the two village schools, and, by the end of the 1880s, he held the livings of both churches. Villagers on his estate were housed in model cottages; they were materially better off than many of their contemporaries, but their lives were controlled by their landlord (12).

Some of the Waifs and Strays cases show a similar benevolent despotism. Annie S. and her sister were the daughters of the Duke of Northumberland's nightwatchman. When their father died, the Duchess arranged for their admission to the Waifs and Strays. She agreed to pay the full cost of their maintenance within the Society, and showed considerable interest in them, demanding regular reports, and refusing to allow them to be discharged to employment until a year after the Society had originally recommended. There is no evidence that their mother remained in contact with them: indeed, according to the casepaper, she had formally surrendered control of her children in exchange for the Duchess's assistance (13).

By the end of the nineteenth century, only a minority of villages were entirely dependent upon the local landlord, but contemporary accounts make it clear that, even in relatively open townships, where the monopoly of ownership had been broken, it was by no means easy for independent labourers to question the authority of the local squirearchy (14).

Like Lord Wantage, many landowners were in control of both the local

school and the church. Schoolmasters and clergy often saw themselves as the representatives of their employers. In her autobiography, Kate Taylor recounts how, when the local schoolmaster heard how she had refused to curtsy to the lady of the manor, she was beaten in front of the whole school to teach her deference (15). The stepparents of one of the sample children, Annie W., were turned out of their cottage by the local vicar and his wife 'because of adverse reports' (16).

Many Anglican clergy were younger sons of the minor gentry; their livings were in the hands of the local squire. An inevitable alliance grew up between the local land-owner and his clergyman, both of whom regarded non-conformity in religion, as in other matters, as a threat. Lord and Lady Wantage expected their tenants to attend church twice every Sunday, and refused to provide land for a non-conformist chapel. As late as 1961, all but three residents of the estate were, at least nominally, Anglican. In the open village of Tysoe, all the more independent labourers were non-conformists; successive Anglican clergymen encouraged the villagers to defer to their betters and to refrain from questioning authority (17). This alliance between the Anglican clergy and the gentry can be seen in some of the Waifs and Strays case-papers, and is a significant factor in the relationship between the referrer, the clergyman who forwarded the application, and the child.

The case of William H. illustrates the pressures inherent in such a relationship. He was an illegitimate child, received into the Society's care on the death of his mother. Lady Clementine Mitford supported his application to the society, and paid for his maintenance. When he was

twelve, she wrote to the home, fully endorsing the Society's suggestion that he should be emigrated. However, although the boy was happy to go, his maternal grandparents refused, despite considerable pressure, to give their consent. The vicar wrote to Lady Mitford, whose address suggests that she was probably the local landlord, claiming that the grandparents:

will not listen to any advice, and declare that the boy is going to be transported...They are sadly ungrateful to you after all you have done for Willie...I have seen the stepfather, who says that he is willing that you should decide what was best to be done about Willie. You had been so good to him that he thought you knew best what ought to be done and he was very much obliged to your Ladyship (18, his emphasis).

Among the concerns that were frequently expressed about the growth of the towns was the fear that in large, open conurbations the lower classes lacked the civilising influence of the gentry that could be found in the country, particularly in closed villages. This theory was at the basis of the settlement movement of the 1870s and 1880s and of the district visiting societies which flourished at about the same time (19); it was also put forward to rationalise the class relationships in the Waifs and Strays Society:

There never was such a time when the highest classes were so much separated from the lowest, and never was there such an accumulation of wealth in the hands of the few and such absolute destitution as in the large towns and manufacturing places. Before the rich could help the poor it was necessary that one must be known to the other, and the higher stratum connected to the lower, and it was that connecting link that the society formed (20).

It was in the villages and in the smaller towns that this type of paternalistic relationship between rich and poor could most often be found. Country children were more likely to be known to the local gentry

who, for their part, would have had more leisure to devote to them. At a time when organised, professional social work was in its infancy, the Society depended to a considerable extent upon this type of relationship for the referral of children. It is therefore hardly surprising that, in spite of the obvious needs of children from the urban slums, many of the Waifs and Strays children came from the type of rural locality in which paternalism was most likely to persist. In fact, children who came from villages of less than 3,000 inhabitants were significantly more likely to have been referred independently by unattached individuals ($p < 0.05$).

Although the paternalism of village society might seem oppressive today, at the time it was widely considered to be beneficial. As Mills points out, most social and industrial philanthropists used the example of the rural estate village as a model for their schemes (21). The emphasis on moving children from the evil influences of the towns to the pure country air was not solely for the benefit of their health. Most of the Society's residential and foster homes were to be found in country villages where children could be isolated from their former associates, and benefit from the active involvement of the local ladies committee. St. Michael's Orphanage, Balscote was founded by the parish clergyman, and placed under the superintendence of 'a lady, a relative of Archbishop Trench, who lives in the Home and gives her services for the love of the work'. The matron served under her. In 1884, the Home was affiliated to the Society which claimed:

It cannot be doubted that the pure air and simple ways of so small and quiet a country home will, in the course of time, work a great improvement, both morally and physically, in the poor children who are here withdrawn from the polluting

atmosphere of the dens of our great cities (22).

Only a few of the parish ladies who referred children to the Waifs and Strays possessed the aristocratic credentials of Lady Mitford or the Duchess of Northumberland. Nevertheless their attitudes towards the poor were the same. All the upper and middle-class referrers held the assumption that their position, wealth and education entitled them to make vital decisions regarding the future of children on behalf of their social inferiors; all were convinced that their way of life was not only materially, but also morally superior to that of the poor; many were able to provide financial backing to support their opinions. Over 50% of the children admitted on the recommendation of private individuals received financial support from their referrers.

Many of the children in the sample came from destitute homes where they were severely neglected. The intervention of middle-class women into their lives was frequently overbearing, but in many cases it was undoubtedly beneficial. Nathaniel P. was almost starved before being rescued by the vicar's wife from a mother who 'was often heard to say that she wished it (sic) was dead' (23). William F. had been deliberately abandoned by his mother in the Strand before a group of ladies undertook his care (see below) (24). Some of the parish ladies who referred children to the Society were extremely sensitive: Helen Milman, who was local secretary for Tenby, went to considerable lengths to ensure that two sisters were kept together, turning down the offer of separate placements, and keeping her committee waiting for three months until suitable vacancies occurred (25). Prochaska rightly states that : 'At the level of human contact, in

often tragic circumstances, the idea that philanthropy can be reduced to a form of middle-class social control, unresponsive to the genuine grievances of the poor, is not only inadequate but insensitive'(26).

Nevertheless, the relationship between child and referrer held serious inherent disadvantages. The conviction of their moral superiority persuaded most of the middle-class parish ladies that contact with their own life-style was the most effective means of securing a satisfactory outcome for the children whom they referred. This meant that almost all the girls were trained for domestic service. Only those for whom respectability seemed an impossible attainment were taught other, less genteel skills such as machine knitting or laundry work. Many of the boys were also offered similar opportunities in the gardens or stables of large houses. Four were sent out as pages, while several others joined C.A.Stein's House Boy Brigade as the first step in a career that might help them eventually to become butlers. A number of children of both sexes who proved unsuitable were emigrated.

The belief that domestic service would be universally acknowledged as a desirable outcome was so profound that many of the girls were referred on the grounds that 'with training she could become a useful servant'. Those adolescents who left jobs in respectable, middle class households to return to their relations were regarded as failures: sometimes the Society went to considerable lengths to persuade them to return. When Annie R. reached sixteen she left her situation and went to live with her sister. The local secretary wrote to headquarters asking if they would send Mr Williams, the after-care officer, to find out:

if she would promise to go to service if we took steps at once to get her a place as under servant in a good house where she would be under the training of an upper servant. If we could get her promise to do this we would at once take steps to procure her a place so as to give her a good start. Should you be able to help us in this way we should be so much obliged - as we feel if we lose her now we lose her altogether (27).

In this particular instance the local secretary's attempts to extend the period of control may well have been justified: Annie later turned up in a female mission, pregnant and due for transfer to the workhouse (28).

Although domestic service was the major form of employment for women at the time, there were other jobs available. However factory work and semi-skilled trades did not offer the control that could be exerted by a mistress in a well-run household. In fact, referrers paid to have girls such as Elizabeth P. rescued and trained in domestic work by the Society in order 'that she might be saved from the dangers of factory life' (29). Girls in service would be constantly supervised on leaving the Society's care: someone would know what time they were in bed at night, someone would demand a respectable appearance and demeanour, and make sure that they did their work. They would probably be obliged to attend Church. The civilising and controlling influence exerted by the Society could thus be continued, through service, into adult life. There were considerable advantages to the children in entering domestic service, and these, together with their overall work experiences, will be considered in some detail later. Nevertheless, the use of service as a means of exerting control, however benign, cannot be ignored.

The insistence on domestic service as a desirable outcome emphasised the social gulf that existed between referrer and referred. The children

were not treated as equals by their rescuers, but as potential employees. Thus when Ada W. was saved from a probable life of sin, and removed from the low lodging house in which she lived with her younger sister and her raffish grandmother, she was taken in not by her rescuer, but by her rescuer's servant:

Having seen for myself what a low, bad place the lodging house was, I saw that if we wished to save the girl we must take her away, so determined to bring her to my own home and let her stay with my servant, while I tried to get her into some home. I find Ada W. a good girl to work, willing and industrious, and my servant tells me she has not seen, or heard anything wrong in the girl while she has been living here. The girl seems to have good abilities, and if she can only be kept from her relations, and well-trained, may be a good and useful woman (30).

When one realises that the people who rescued children in order that they might be trained as servants were also their potential employers, the conflict of interests becomes obvious. Occasionally this was explicit: when May S.'s mother died she was left at home with a father who drank and an elder sister who was considered to be 'very unsteady'. Her father agreed to give her up entirely to a Mrs Waterhouse who placed her in the Newcastle Diocesan Home and paid 2s 6d a week for her keep. This would have covered about half her expenses. However, when May was five, her sponsor found she could no longer keep up the payments, and in any case, decided that the home was unsuitable for a child this age. May was taken into the Waifs and Strays, and placed in the Hillingdon Home until she was fourteen, and ready for service. Mrs Waterhouse no longer paid towards her maintenance, but kept in touch. She made it plain to the staff at Hillingdon that she was 'very anxious that [May] should if possible be trained under a servant in a gentleman's family as she means to have her

herself some day'(31, my emphasis).

More often, the potential for exploitation was much more subtle. A respectable employer was able to confer considerable benefits on his employees. Not only were the material circumstances of those in residential domestic service considerably higher than they might expect within the community, but through working closely with the gentry, they also acquired, by association, a measure of prestige.

Bill Bowder states that 'the local clergyman was bound to come round to the home to pick himself a suitable girl to keep his house, he had first choice of the bunch'(32). Nevertheless, those who were chosen to work for him would undoubtedly have been in an advantageous position: the clergyman would have been involved in his local home and therefore might have been expected to have at least some understanding of the circumstances of its inmates; his position within the community would have conferred a measure of status on his employees. Rudolf himself employed children from the homes, and it is obvious that a situation in his household was regarded as a coveted position (33).

When Henrietta E. was six her father died, leaving her mother with five children under the age of ten. Outdoor relief was only granted on a temporary basis. Her father had been employed as a gardener by the local vicar, and it was a relative of his, Miss Hingerstone-Randolph, who referred Henrietta to the Society. The application form claimed that 'both parents were, and the mother is, very superior in every way. Excellent servants - steady, sober and entirely trustworthy'. Henrietta was placed a few miles away with a foster mother; the placement was so

successful that the boarding-out inspectress asked if Henrietta might be allowed to remain there until a suitable job could be found for her. The foster mother agreed to keep her for a year beyond her fourteenth birthday without payment, and indeed, 'would entirely adopt her if it were not that she fears that her own mother ... might reclaim her after she had taught her dressmaking or otherwise had the trouble and expense of fitting her to earn her own livelihood.' However, six months after this had been agreed, Miss Hingerston-Randolph, who was Henrietta's godmother and, though not contributing to her maintenance, had 'always taken an interest in the child', offered to take her as a servant and train her. The foster mother, while stating that 'she would like Ettie always to look on her as her mother' was 'willing to let her go as it seems such a good opening for her'(34). Was Henrietta being exploited, or was she being offered an opportunity to improve her prospects by a woman who genuinely had her interests at heart?

The real drawback in the relationship between the middle-class women who referred children to the Society and the waifs and strays in whom they showed an interest lay not so much in its inequality, or in the potential for exploitation, as in its lack of commitment. This was particularly true when parish ladies were acting independently, without the backing of a recognised organisation or society. These referrers were amateurs : they had neither professional insight into the consequences of their actions, nor the stamina to see the task through. For many of them the care of destitute children was a hobby, to be picked up for a time, but dropped when other, more pressing interests intervened.

Most parish ladies had no plans to act as substitute parents to the children with whom they became involved. They worked as agents for the Society by arranging admissions , supervising local foster homes and occasionally interviewing parents about emigration and potential discharge. In many ways they were the prototypes for modern social workers. However their awareness of class was a major obstacle to closer contact with the children; few had any intention of physically caring for their proteges. One member of a voluntary boarding-out committee told the poor law inspector that she could not have been expected to examine the bedroom of a seriously neglected foster child because it would have been 'unladylike' for her to do so (35). Another parish lady, who paid for the maintenance of a Waifs and Strays child, sent presents to her protegee and visited her. In 1902 she invited her to stay for a three weeks holiday - not in her own home, but with a foster mother in the village (36).

The only major long-term commitment made by these ladies was to provide maintenance. The Society calculated that it cost £13 per year to keep a child in a foster home, or £15 for residential care. Many of the referees agreed to pay, sometimes with the help of local supporters, for the children whose application they sought. Other children were supported by sponsors who had answered advertisements placed in the Waifs and Strays' magazine. This scheme will be examined in some detail in a later chapter. The majority of sponsors were identical in class and cultural expectations to the parish ladies who referred children. Children were expected to remain with the Society until they reached at least the age of fourteen. Although organisational sponsors tended to keep up

payments , many individuals found that the commitment grew increasingly irksome. Of the 88 individuals who contributed towards a child's support, only 26 paid the full maintenance sum throughout his stay with the Society. Several of them lost interest when they married or moved away from an area. Others died, and their relatives refused to continue payments. The Duke of Northumberland was rare in insisting that his proteges remain in the Society's care for an extra year: many other sponsors wrote to complain that their children were not being encouraged to support themselves, and some refused to continue payments after the child reached an age at which they thought he should be working (37).

Several cases illustrate how early enthusiasm waned when it became apparent just how great a commitment was necessary to care for a child throughout the years of dependency, even when little physical contact was involved. William F. was the illegitimate son of a servant girl. A group of local ladies had helped his mother through her confinement and had contributed towards his maintenance with a private foster mother. When he was two, his mother had reclaimed him and then tried to abandon him in London; the ladies had returned him to his foster home and agreed to maintain him entirely, on condition that his mother renounced her right to custody. Three years later, one of these ladies had left the area 'and the others, from straitened means, and other circumstances, feel that they can no longer afford the weekly payment'. Thus, at the age of five, he was abandoned by the people who had , for apparently laudable reasons, persuaded his mother to renounce her right to custody in their favour. Application was made to the Waifs and Strays, who removed William from the

foster mother who had cared for him since birth, and placed him in a private residential home which had a reciprocal arrangement to receive their children for a minimal fee (38).

A similar case lends some insight into the motivation behind some of these arrangements. A Miss Bere wrote to the Society in 1888, offering to undertake the care of a child. Again, she had no intention of looking after the child herself:

some friends wish to join me in taking charge of a little child if you have one on your waiting list or otherwise whom you would like to send us. We would place the child with a very respectable widow who has brought up her own orphan children exceedingly well...She is a churchwoman, but ...not yet a communicant, but in every other respect I do not think a child could have a better or a happier home...

We are all agreed as to what we should much prefer, namely a little girl, of from three to five years of age, and if an orphan so much the better...Of course we should undertake the entire cost of the child, food, clothing and school, and constantly look after her (39,her emphasis).

Rudolf sent her Evelyn F., who was not quite two at the time. Four years later, Miss Bere had left the area, and a different supervisor was found. Miss Bere still continued to direct operations from a distance, but in 1895, when Evelyn was nine, she wrote to say that the foster mother was planning to remarry and move away from the village.

She would have much liked to have taken the child with her, but that, for several reasons could not be sanctioned, and there is no one else in the parish who would undertake the charge with whom we should like to place her - [the foster mother's] son and wife (Evelyn's 'Daddy' and 'Auntie') would like to keep her, and were most kind to her, but she is a dissenter, as are all her family who live next door.

The letter concludes with the ominous warning that '...All (local) subscriptions for Evelyn are certain to cease directly she leaves the place' (40).

Although, Evelyn's grandmother would have been willing to give her a home, neither Miss Bere nor the Society felt able to provide the financial support that she required. Evelyn was moved to a village that was too far away for her grandmother to visit, and placed with a single lady who, unusually, had offered to foster a child herself. The placement was sanctioned on the grounds that 'it would strengthen our work in the district'; it lasted for three months. Although Miss Bere was no longer paying for Evelyn's support, she continued to advise Rudolf as to the suitability of proposed placements. She remained in touch with Evelyn, for it was 'so good for the child to feel that friends at a distance take an interest in her'(41).

Miss Bere and her friends had no intention of looking after Evelyn themselves. As soon as a slight difficulty arose, they siezed upon an excuse to withdraw their support. They can hardly be said to have been motivated by a love of children or even a spirit of generosity: the sum they gave the foster mother was less than either the Waifs and Strays Society, or even the guardians of the poor normally paid as a boarding-out allowance. There was no question of their transferring the money to the grandmother or to a foster parent who was unknown to them. Why then did they and people like them become involved in the care of destitute children?

The key to this puzzle lies in the curiously distant nature of the relationship. At a time when the role of middle-class women within the home had been largely delegated to servants, while there were still few opportunities for work in the outside community, philanthropy offered a

rare opportunity to exercise power. This was particularly true when the transaction was between an adult of a superior social class and a child of the lower orders, 'and if an orphan, so much the better'. There were 'a great many ladies in the country who are glad of a little work' (42), and the reclamation of a destitute child gave many people whose own lives lacked purpose the chance to play God. It is quite clear that many of the referrers needed the children at least as much as the children needed them. Significantly, over half (53%) of the children referred by private individuals were sent by single women whose role in late Victorian society was notoriously marginal.

The letters on the case-files suggest that many of the referrers were constantly on the move, visiting friends and relations or oscillating between country and town. Philanthropy was a hobby which filled their spare moments, and created an illusion of busyness. Some of the parish ladies had rescued five or six children and could legitimately claim that their lives were filled with the urgent task of soliciting subscriptions for their support (43). However, when other interests came to the fore, these same ladies became unavailable, and could rarely offer a substitute. The constraints imposed by their own schedules probably lent an exaggerated urgency to the cases referred: William L.'s referrer wrote:

this week I have three urgent cases: two little girls and one boy of the same family - and something must be done for them before I leave home on Monday next. The little girls I must provide for in a local home till I come back....if I go away and leave [William], desperate as he is, having just lost his place and no chance of getting another - he will spoil my holiday - for there is nothing else I know of to save him from prison - when I return will probably be too late (44).

William was sent to the Society's home at Frome and placed out with a grocer who ill-treated him. Although he allegedly came from 'a wretched home in the worst part of town' the next time he saw his father he 'cried very much and begged his father to take him home with him, which he did after thinking over the matter' (45). The illusion that each case demanded urgent attention probably encouraged referrers to promise a level of long-term support that they were unable to provide.

The relationship which developed was singularly unequal: it consisted of patronage on the one side and gratitude on the other. Class barriers prevented sponsors from allowing a close relationship to develop between themselves and their proteges. The practice of arranging substitute care rather than offering direct contact themselves, enabled parish ladies to distance themselves further from their proteges, and maintain an unreal, sentimentalised view of the work. Foster parents met the children on their own level, and often developed close links with them. A number were deeply upset if, for any reason, the relationship terminated. On the other hand, the relationship between child and sponsor was generally too cool for emotional involvement.

If a child failed to live up to a sponsor's expectations, the relationship could be abruptly curtailed. A Miss Churchill paid the full maintenance for Edward H. from the time he was admitted to the Society at the age of seven. By 1893 she had married, and just after Edward's twelfth birthday she wrote to Rudolf, suggesting that it was time for him to earn his living. 'I have paid for him for several years and should like to hear that he will soon be out in the world' (46). This suggestion appears to

have met with an unfavourable response, for nine months later she wrote again, proposing to take Edward on as a stable boy from his next birthday. Her letters illustrate the extent of control an employer expected to exert over domestic servants: 'He will have to spend the evening in the house helping the Butler. He will be taught to wait at table, but he will be all day in the stable. We don't allow him out without leave and wish him to go to Church always'. In return for these duties she proposed 'to clothe him at first, giving him a little money (1s a week at first) each week as pocket money. We shall put him in livery. If we find he does not suit I suppose we can send him back' (47).

Contemporary wage-books suggest that this remuneration was far below anything Edward might have been able to earn in another household, especially as he was being asked to undertake the duties of both a stable-boy and a house-boy (48). It is difficult to avoid the suspicion that Mrs Truell (as she now was), having tired of supporting Edward, decided to employ him in order to see a return on her investment. However, just before he was due to begin working for her, she discovered that he was 'given to pilfering', which rendered him ineligible for the job she offered. She wrote to the local secretary for his home, offering to pay expenses if the Society proposed emigrating him, but otherwise refusing to contribute further towards his maintenance (49).

Finally, the many issues raised by the practice of accepting private referrals and offers of sponsorship from parish ladies who were convinced of their own superiority to the families and children with whom they

became involved, are illustrated by the activities of Henrietta Haldane. Between April 1887 and December 1888 at least eight children from six different families from the villages around Lowestoft in Suffolk were admitted to the Society's care at Miss Haldane's instigation (50). According to the brief published case summaries all were 'surrounded by evil influences', or 'in danger' when they were rescued and placed in the Society's care. The one child for whom this was not specifically mentioned in the summary had an 'immoral' mother. Yet all these children came from small country villages: Lowestoft had a population of under 20,000 and Kirkley, from which several of the children came, had less than 5,000 inhabitants. Three of these children appeared among the 400 sample cases. One of them had two siblings who were also admitted to the Society's care. A closer examination of these five case histories underlines many of the aspects of the relationship between referrer and referred that have been discussed above.

Emily P., Beatrice B. and Mary T. were all admitted in order to be trained for service. Though 'surrounded by evil' they were 'good material'. Emily P. was 'a nice little girl and might make into a good servant'; Mary T., who had 'been going about with the Salvation Army which has done her harm' was recommended on the grounds that she was 'quieter than many and has no fringe'. It is clear that service was intended to confer both conformity and respectability (51).

Jack, William and Emily P. all came from the same family. Their father had repeatedly deserted the family and eventually drowned at sea, leaving their mother with four children, all under the age of twelve. The mother

was a 'very coarse, low, bad, drinking' woman who had allegedly 'driven her husband to the bad', and the children had spent periods in the workhouse school. William was believed to be illegitimate . Miss Haldane had rescued all three of these children and placed them with foster parents in her own village, whom she initially paid five shillings and sixpence per week for each child. However she had 'several other children on [her] hands' and was unable to keep up payments. She applied to several different voluntary homes before eventually securing places for them with the Waifs and Strays. She guaranteed to provide weekly maintenance of four shillings and sixpence for Jack and one shilling for William. Emily was supported by other subscribers. William and Emily were boarded out under the same supervisor and remained in touch. Four months after Jack's admission Miss Haldane wrote:

I do not think I must continue to keep Jack entirely. Can you find anyone who would be responsible for part of the payment? It would be sad to remove him from W. Braithwaite's unless he could be got on any (?good) ship free?

I earnestly ask the Committee to consider this case (52, her emphasis).

This request was refused, but Miss Haldane continued to put pressure on the Society to send Jack out to earn his living, and finally gave notice that she would cease to pay maintenance after December 1891, when Jack would have been twelve, or just thirteen. The Society continued to keep him as a free case and, like many of the other children, he contributed towards his support with a part-time job before school. Nine months later he was discovered to have stolen several sums of money from his employers and sacked. The secretary for the Leicester Home in which he had been placed wrote asking for him to be immediately removed 'his continued stay

here being dangerous to other boys and likely to do the Home great damage'. The other Society homes were all full, and there appears to have been some plan to resolve this crisis by returning him to his mother: Miss Haldane's assistance was sought, but by now she had lost all interest in Jack and his siblings. She wrote:

I have had nothing to do with Kirkley for the last four years and have no idea of his mother's address.

She was a most undesirable woman for children to be with, which is why I first asked your society to take up her children.

Perhaps you could obtain her address from his sister who is in some Home of yours (though I do not know where). The youngest brother is also I believe under the Society's care.

For myself, I should think the best thing for the boy would be to get him committed by a Magistrate and then sent to a reformatory (53).

When he was forty, Jack wrote to the Society asking if they had any details of his family background as he needed them for a job application. It appears from his letter that not only had he been effectively separated from his 'undesirable' mother, but also from his siblings, of whose existence he seemed unaware (54).

Towards the end of the century, some criticism was voiced concerning the cavalier way in which individual referrers and sponsors undertook responsibility for separated children with little appreciation of the long-term commitment involved. In 1890, the Waifs and Strays invited C.S.Loch, Secretary to the Charity Organisation Society, to address a public conference on the question: 'Is it desirable in any case to relieve parents of their responsibilities in regard to their children?'. Starting with the premise that it was always dangerous to allow a parent

to escape his responsibilities, he then emphasised the importance of preserving family ties. He went on to argue that anyone who took over a parent's responsibilities must do so wholeheartedly:

Justice seems to demand that anyone who intentionally deprives a child of its mother's care should take the place of its mother, not only for a few years but until such time as the child shall have found for itself other ties and other friends. In the case of a child two years of age, twelve years of age, if it is to end there, does not make up to it for the loss of the prolonged protection which it would naturally receive from its mother (55).

He went on to cite several cases of children who had been damaged when 'the blindness of intention which attempts to benefit a child by removing it from its surroundings, finds itself too often insufficient to fulfil the obligations it has undertaken.'

The lack of commitment and the potential for exploitation are not so evident in the cases in which children were referred or supported by members of voluntary organisations, rather than by individuals acting in their own right. If a member of the local Association for the Care of Friendless Girls, or a local secretary for the Waifs and Strays grew tired of the work, then a replacement could usually be found to take her place. Moreover, those acting in a semi-official capacity had to justify their actions to a committee, who might have queried a high referral rate, particularly if the maintenance of admitted children was to come from local funds. Thus it is not surprising to find that children who were backed by an organisation rather than by a private individual were more likely to be maintained throughout their stay with the Society, and less likely to find that the agreement had abruptly been terminated.

I had hoped to be able to show that the number of referrals from

private individuals gradually diminished in the face of an increasingly professional network of semi-official diocesan secretaries and representatives of other, growing organisations. Although there is some indication that this may have been the case, over the eight years from which the sample was taken the trend is not sufficiently marked to be statistically significant.

Private Homes

The work of parish ladies was an extension of the traditional relationship between the gentry and the poor. Some members of the upper classes had carried this role still further, and established their own private homes for the care of rescued children. It is evident from the sample data that at the end of the nineteenth century there were considerable numbers of these homes throughout the country, founded by private individuals, or groups of ladies, and now largely forgotten.

In the early years the Society built up close links with a number of these homes: many of them were completely transferred to the Waifs and Strays on the death or retirement of their founders. In 1894, the last year from which the sample was drawn, the majority of the Society's homes had been established privately and then later transferred, complete with staff and inmates; 29 (7%) of the sample children entered the Waifs and Strays in this way. In addition, the Society ran an affiliation scheme through which established Anglican homes might be inspected and accredited as part of the Waifs and Strays network. While nominally under the care of the Society, about 11% of the sample children spent their first

placements in homes which had only a loose connection with the Waifs and Strays; the sample data reveals that at least 53 different private homes were being used by the Society during the period under scrutiny. A further 44 (12%) of the sample children had also been placed in a home run by a private individual or a rival organisation prior to their admission to the Waifs and Strays.

There were three major initiatives behind the development of these private homes. Some, such as Rose and Lee Cottage Homes in Dickleburgh (transferred in 1888) had been founded in an attempt to rescue pauper children from the workhouse. These tended to preserve their poor law association even after management had been handed over to the Society. The Dickleburgh homes were among several private homes which had been founded by clergymen. Other homes had been established by committees which were generally local branches of national organisations. Thus the Hull home (transferred in 1892) had been founded as a rescue home by the local Association for the Care of Friendless Girls. Connaught House in Winchester (transferred in 1886), which was one of the many training homes for young servants, had also been founded as a rescue home by a committee of ladies: the Bournemouth Association for the Care of Friendless girls retained a permanent bed in this home (56). Attached to the Winchester home was also a hostel, providing accommodation for impecunious gentlewomen. The children waited on the lady boarders, who had no apparent responsibilities towards them, although they occasionally helped to run the training home during staff shortages. The presence of the hostel emphasises the suspicion that some ladies' committees tended to

view social work largely in terms of accommodating and training future servants: in this case both housemaids and potential governesses (57).

However, the majority of private homes used by the Society appear to have had no previous affiliations, but had been established independently through the initiative of particular individuals. The Talbot Home in Bournemouth had been founded by the Earls of Leven and Melville, who, even after management had passed to the Society, continued to pay for the entire cost of its upkeep and the maintenance of the twenty boys who lived there. This was only one of several homes founded by members of the aristocracy. Among others used by the Society were Lady Clinton's homes in Devon and Sussex, Lady Elizabeth Legge's home in Wales and the Countess of Pemberton's home near Salisbury.

Although some of these homes were affiliated, and therefore subject to some form of inspection by the Society, there were no statutory regulations for their management. The independent homes, in particular, tended to show the same characteristics as the work of the parish ladies discussed above, but on a magnified scale.

Just as the parish ladies tended to lose interest in their charges when pressed by other demands on their time, so did the proprietors of private homes demonstrate a similar unreliability: one of the major difficulties posed by the smaller, unregulated, private homes was their inability to provide continuous care. Alice C., had spent at least three years in Lord Crewe's orphanage in Banburgh before it closed down when she was thirteen. Luckily the trustees had enough money to pay for her training in one of the Waifs and Strays homes for a further two and a half years. Otherwise

she might well have been discharged abruptly to the first person who offered her a job; plenty of poor law children were earning a living at thirteen (58). Walter J. was placed in Miss Cooke's Orphanage when his mother died. The proprietress 'adopted' both Walter and his two elder siblings, which probably meant that she took them free of charge on condition that all contact with their disreputable father ceased. When Walter proved to be less intelligent than his siblings, the 'adoption' was forgotten, and Miss Cooke arranged for him to be transferred to the Waifs and Strays (59). Both these children were fortunate in that the private individuals who had undertaken responsibility for them continued to offer some financial support after their practical care had ceased.

Less commitment was shown to some of the other children who had been placed in private homes. Jessie J.'s father died, leaving her and her two siblings in the care of a mother who had 'never troubled herself about them'. She was also believed to be in some moral danger because 'their mother keeps very bad company, both men and women'. The Waifs and Strays Society tried to place her with Mrs Wilde, who kept a private orphanage in Cheam, and took in children at the very low rate of three shillings per week. However the application paper was returned with the following letter:

The child referred to in the case paper you sent me and which I return is rather too old for me, and I should be afraid of her knowing too much of evil. If her sister of three and three quarters years is a nice little thing and medically speaking satisfactory I should like to hear more of her. She would be too young to have learnt any vice and I should not be so much afraid of taking her from low surroundings (60).

So Jessie, at five, was considered too depraved to enter Mrs Wilde's home,

and her sister Julia was admitted in her place. However six years later Mrs Wilde was in delicate health. She had remarried and the orphanage was closing. Julia was the only child who remained, and Mrs Wilde's new husband was very anxious that she should give up responsibility for her as soon as Rudolf could find her an alternative home (61).

Some of the smaller, unregulated private homes also appear to have been extremely amateur. The founder of St Saviour's Home in Shrewsbury (transferred in 1892) wrote to Rudolf:

Did Mr Munro tell you that I was frightened of typewritten letters? I have had none since. But I am not so stupid as that really and it must save you. I was afraid of you all at first and felt strange, but now please, I feel as if I and the Society were very good friends (62).

One wonders how she coped with the 'fifteen girls with immoral tendencies' for whom the home was established.

Twenty-nine of the sample children entered the Society's care when the private home in which they had been previously placed was transferred to the Waifs and Strays. Although the number of children placed privately diminished as the numbers in the Society's homes increased, for many children the change was purely administrative, and the placement remained the same. The rapid expansion of the Society through the transfer of existing private homes was not without its problems. As Bowder has pointed out, while Rudolf and his executive may have been relatively liberal in their attitudes towards the children under their care, some of the homes which they inherited were run by harsh disciplinarians, who remained in charge after the transfer (63). The sample data provided no evidence of

overt cruelty to children in Waifs and Strays homes, although some, such as the Hull and the Brighton homes, did appear to have inherited exceptionally harsh regimes (64).

Administrative changes were not the sole reason why the numbers of children in private homes gradually decreased. Not only did the Society have less need to find alternative placements as its own accommodation increased, the experiences of individual children, detailed above, together with public expressions of concern as to the welfare of children in unregulated private homes are likely to have discouraged the executive from using them as placements.

In 1884, Emma Stirling raised the issue in a letter to the Journal of the Reformatories and Refuges Union. She pointed out that:

any one, no matter who, any man or woman, of philanthropic or speculative tendencies, is at present at perfect liberty to open a house, call it a 'Home'...for the reception of children of any age, for whose treatment he or she may (and not unfrequently does) refuse to be responsible to anybody, of whose well-being and well or ill-doing he or she is the supreme judge, from whose verdict there is no appeal - at least none such as a child can have access to (65).

She went on to claim that these homes had been established from a variety of motives, not always entirely benevolent; even those founders who had the best interests of the children at heart nevertheless tended to hand over their day to day care to paid officials who were often encouraged to pay more attention to keeping down expenses than to the well-being of their charges.

I say most solemnly that I have known the sufferings of children to be very great in such places. Consider the necessity laid upon the unfortunate matron of satisfying the committee by a certain amount of work being done, and only a certain sum being expended for food &c., and you will see the

temptation of being a pretty hard task master. I can testify that committees of ladies sanction girls being worked in ways and to an extent which workhouse governors do not. The reason I believe is ignorance, that so few ladies know from experience what hard work really is, and therefore cruelly exact it under the cloak of the highest religious profession. Parish children are practically in a much safer position. There is at least redress to be had for them, they have guardians at all events who are legally responsible. The guilty children are far safer, for they are sent to Reformatories and Industrial Schools which are under a system of authorized inspection, more or less complete. But, in the cases of innocent children..., whose only crime is their poverty, or of those who having happened to attract the attention of some well-intentioned, but not otherwise individual, are forthwith hunted up; in these cases the remaining parent, either widowed mother or sick father, is worried into signing away the child's liberty...; the child is then consigned to the tender mercies of people who do not even profess to love it (66).

Her solution was to suggest that the homes should be required to obtain a license for every child whose relatives paid less than £25 per year.

Emma Stirling was experienced in the child welfare field, but her letter nevertheless provoked sharp criticism from William Quarrier, the founder of a large group of homes in Glasgow, who asserted that it 'must have astonished those of your readers who are Masters, Superintendents, Matrons or Teachers, or who are on the Committees of Institutions or Homes' (67). Although he suggested that Miss Stirling had no evidence upon which to base her claims, worries about the lack of accountability in private homes tended to resurface periodically over the next few years.

It is evident that by the end of the century, the Waifs and Strays Society had entered into this debate. In 1902 a conference of many representatives of children's societies and institutions was held at the Waifs and Strays offices to 'consider the desirability of the compulsory

registration and inspection of all children's homes appealing to the public for support'. A resolution in favour of such action was passed and sent to the Secretary of State (68). Such a recommendation was later supported by the research of Frances Low, who published details of a survey of sixty children's homes, undertaken in order to secure the inclusion of provisions for compulsory inspection in the 1908 Children Act. She claimed that 20% of the homes she visited were run entirely for the benefit of their founders or their relatives, and ought to be closed forthwith (69). In spite of this pressure, no provision for compulsory inspection was made until the Children and Young Persons Act of 1933 (70).

While there is little evidence that the numbers of independent referrers decreased during the sample period, it does appear that the Society began to make less and less use of private homes. The proportion of boys accommodated in independent or affiliated homes fell from 23% in 1888 to 7% in 1894; the proportion of girls placed in similar accommodation dropped from 15% to 10% over the same period. Although this fall can partly be ascribed to administrative changes, it seems likely that increasing concern as to the care provided in such homes led the Society to reduce its involvement with unattached organisations.

CHAPTER SIX: THE PARENTS' CIRCUMSTANCES

However much middle-class observers might consider that separation would be beneficial for a particular family, they were nevertheless bound by several constraints. As an earlier chapter has demonstrated, it was extremely difficult to remove children legally from the custody of unfit parents. Table 6.1 illustrates the provisions under which children entered the Waifs and Strays. Only 32 (8%) of the sample children were legally committed to the Society's care, regardless of parental wishes. There is little background information on the groups of children who had been placed in poor law or voluntary homes that were later absorbed into the Society's network, or on the ten poor law children who were admitted solely for the purpose of emigration, but it seems likely that the majority had lost contact with their parents or guardians through death or desertion well before admission to the Waifs and Strays. By far the largest group of children, 74% of the sample cases, were admitted from the community on a voluntary basis; for each of these admissions, the consent of those who held custody was required. Parents had to agree to permit their children 'when fully trained to be sent to any situation in the United Kingdom which may be obtained for [them] by the Committee'(1). They can hardly have been unaware that admission was expected to entail a long-term, possibly permanent, separation. What were the circumstances which led so many of them to give at least a nominal consent to such a parting?

TABLE 6.1

CIRCUMSTANCES OF ADMISSION
(Waifs and Strays sample data 1887-1894, 397 cases)

<u>CIRCUMSTANCES</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Voluntary or Poor Law Case in home taken over by the society	30	7.6
Poor Law Case admitted expressly for emigration	10	2.5
Poor Law case admitted for training	12	3.0
Voluntary case admitted directly from the community	292	73.5
Committal	32	8.1
Other	21	5.3
TOTAL		397
Not known		3
		100.0

Contemporary commentators might well have argued that the difficulty lay not in persuading parents to give their consent, but in preventing the societies from being overwhelmed by the demands of feckless parents who were only too happy to relinquish their responsibilities. This theme came into prominence whenever the possibility of restricting the rights of parents to claim custody of their children was discussed. For instance, fears that large numbers of parents would have no objection to being declared 'morally dead' if this meant that they were no longer responsible for the care of their children, permeate the deliberations of the House of Lords Select Committee on Poor Law Relief, which considered the introduction of the earliest form of parental rights resolutions in 1888 (2).

As both contemporary and modern commentators have noted, children played an important part in nineteenth century working-class family economies. Very young children were a drain on a family's resources both in terms of their own inability to contribute to the income, and because their need for care made it difficult for their mothers or older siblings to work. Those in middle childhood might not earn money themselves, but were able to care for younger siblings, and thus enable older family members to be more productive. The wages of adolescents were regarded as part of the family income: according to some commentators, the contributions children made in their early teens were regarded as reimbursements for their years of dependency. Certainly Rowntree found that poverty was cyclical, and that most families went through a period of relative comfort when the wages of adolescents augmented those of parents to provide an adequate

income (3).

Public perceptions of destitute parents altered according to the child's age. Those who were unable or unwilling to support young children were regarded as irresponsible. Yet fears of encouraging dependency amongst feckless parents were balanced by the equally potent view that children needed to be protected from rapacious relatives who were happy for them to be cared for by third parties until they were old enough for their earning potential to be exploited.

Potential supporters of the voluntary societies had to be persuaded that their donations would not encourage feckless parents to evade their responsibilities: thus the view of parents as rapacious and vicious individuals, from whose clutches it was the duty of Christians to rescue children, tended to be emphasised. Recent historians of child care have tended to view the parents in a more compassionate light; writers such as Heywood have argued that, before the introduction of a comprehensive system of welfare benefits, large numbers of parents were so demoralised by chronic destitution that their children could only hope to receive adequate care through permanent separation (4). The data from the Waifs and Strays sample provide a considerable amount of information about the families from which children were admitted to the Society. The following analysis is intended to shed further light on these issues.

Parents' Incomes and Occupations

There is no doubt that many of the parents of the Waifs and Strays children were pitifully poor. The data are broadly contemporaneous with

the social surveys of Charles Booth and B. Seebohm Rowntree, both of whom tried to calculate a poverty line below which it was impossible for families to sustain an adequate standard of living (5). Booth began his survey in 1886, and thus he was describing conditions which prevailed at the time from which the Waifs and Strays sample was drawn. Moreover, he was investigating the situation in London, where nearly 25% of the parents of Waifs and Strays children lived. Seebohm Rowntree began his investigations into conditions in the city of York in 1899, five years after the last child in the Waifs and Strays sample was admitted. His results were very similar to those of Booth, with whom he consulted; they both felt 'no hesitation in regarding [their] estimates of total poverty ...as comparable'(6). As Booth himself conceded, Rowntree's was the more sophisticated analysis. Not only did he separate those families living in primary poverty, whose total earnings were insufficient to maintain an adequate standard of health, from those in secondary poverty, whose condition was attributable to other factors, he also produced a rigorous analysis of the causes and consequences of existence on an insufficient income. He also set out his results with meticulous attention to detail. For these reasons, although Booth's is the more closely contemporaneous survey, Rowntree's work has been used as a particular reference point in the following analysis of the data concerning the income of families of Waifs and Strays children.

Booth considered that those families whose regular income was less than twenty-one shillings per week were poor, while those with less than eighteen shillings were living in a state of chronic want. Rowntree

considered that 'the minimum expenditure necessary to maintain in a state of physical efficiency a family of two adults and three children is 21s 8d'. Although he set his poverty line slightly higher than Booth, he nevertheless divided his population into income categories which were exactly analogous to those used by his predecessor (7).

Rowntree was able to calculate the total incomes for the families in his sample. It should have been possible to produce analogous figures for the families of Waifs and Strays children, for the application forms asked for information about the earnings of both parents, and of older children living at home. However the forms were completed with little reference to the individuals' capacity to work at the time of admission. Thus there are details about the occupation and earnings of many of the parents who had died prior to the application to the Society. Presumably the executive wanted to know what opportunities deceased parents had had to make adequate provision for the future of their families.

Moreover, there is no way of telling from the data whether the incomes given for married women referred to their regular earnings before or after marriage, or to wages earned on a casual basis to supplement the family income at times when the husband's work was scarce. Similarly, from the information collected, it is not possible to ascertain how much of the earnings of older children living at home went into the common purse. The large number of mothers for whom no occupation is given (211:53%), does suggest that many did not go out to work.

It is also worth noting that those who provided the Waifs and Strays data on incomes are likely to have underestimated the figures, for

parents who sought the support of third parties in providing for the needs of their children would have been tempted to underplay their own resources. Thus although the following analysis uses Rowntree's method of classification, the figures are not readily comparable.

Table 6.2 sets out the Waifs and Strays data on parental incomes according to the categories devised by Rowntree and Booth. The case-papers gave information on the earnings of 126 fathers of children admitted to the Society. Their mean weekly wage of 22s 5d was slightly above Rowntree's poverty line, but this figure conceals a very wide range, from the 3s plus board paid to a farm labourer to the £5 earned by a master tailor (8). Nearly 30% of the fathers earned less than 18s per week, incomes which, unless supplemented by wages from mothers or older children, meant that the whole family was 'chronically ill-housed, ill-clothed and underfed'. A further 30% of the fathers earned between 18s and 21s, providing an income which, unless supplemented, enabled a family to teeter on the verge of poverty without necessarily experiencing chronic want. However, although nearly 60% of the Waifs and Strays fathers had incomes below the poverty line of 21s, a surprisingly large proportion earned more substantial wages. Thus 19% of fathers earned between 21 and 30 shillings, and a further 21% earned over 30s per week. Nine of these men in the latter category earned upwards of two pounds a week, and should have had no difficulty in supporting their families.

However, the data on parents' incomes are misleading in that they give no indication as to the extent of casual employment. Both Booth and Rowntree identified irregularity of work as a major cause of poverty;

TABLE 6.2

PARENTAL INCOMES

(Waifs and Strays sample data 1887-1894: 400 cases)
(Classification analogous to that of B. Seebohm Rowntree, 1901)

<u>EARNINGS</u>	ALL FATHERS		CO-RESIDENT FATHERS		
	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>	
Under 5s	2	1.6	0	0.0	
Under 18s	35	27.8	21	43.8	
Under 21s	38	30.2	13	27.0	
Under 30s	24	19.0	10	20.9	
30s and over	27	21.4	4	8.3	
TOTAL	126	100.00	TOTAL	48	100.0
Not known: 274			Not known: 42		
Mean earnings: 22s 5d			Mean earnings: 19s 5d		

SINGLE MOTHERS (not in residential service)			SINGLE MOTHERS:(earnings plus outdoor relief)	
<u>EARNINGS</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Nothing	17	27.4	10	19.6
Under 5s	7	11.3	4	7.8
Under 18s	34	54.8	33	64.7
Under 21s	3	4.8	2	3.9
Under 30s	1	1.6	2	3.9
30s and over	0	0.0	0	0.0
TOTAL	62	100.0	51	100.0
Not known: 52			Not known: 63	
Mean earnings: 6s 0d			Mean earnings: 8s 0d	

historical studies by Stedman-Jones and, more recently, by Phillips and Whiteside, have confirmed the existence of widespread casualisation, affecting a broad range of occupations in the late nineteenth century (9). Information on the parents' occupations helps to provide some explanation as to why even those whose earning capacity was relatively high, were not always able to save for the future.

Table 6.3 lists all the known occupations of fathers in the sample (10). More than ten children were admitted from fathers in each of six occupations: general labouring (48: 18%), house building and maintenance (24: 9%), general transport (14: 5%), shoemaking (13: 5%), outdoor service (13: 5%) and agricultural work (11: 4%). The first four of these occupations appear in Stedman-Jones' list of trades in which a large part of the London labour force could only find casual employment (11). The two other common paternal occupations: outdoor service and farm labourer, were primarily rural jobs. Although farm labourers were also subject to many of the problems of the urban casual labour force, the frequency with which these occupations occurred among Waifs and Strays fathers is most likely to be a further indication of the prevalence of referrals from members of the rural gentry, discussed above.

The men engaged in occupations subject to casualisation were unable to find regular, steady work; they tended to be employed on a daily, or even hourly, basis in areas that were subject to seasonal fluctuations in demand. Adverse weather conditions meant that many were laid off and unable to earn a living wage. Most of these occupations required only minimal skills: those who were unable to find employment in one area

TABLE 6.3

FATHERS' OCCUPATIONS
(Waifs and Strays data 1887-1894: 273 cases)

	ALL FATHERS (273 cases)		CO-RESIDENT FATHERS (90 cases)	
	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
A: PROFESSIONAL, MANAGERIAL				
1.Medicine	2	0.7	0	
2.Teaching	1	0.4	0	
3.Clerk	7	2.6	2	2.2
4.Nursing	0		0	
5.Miscellaneous	2	0.7	0	
subtotal	12	4.4	2	2.2
B: DEFENCE AND PUBLIC ORDER				
6.Army	5	1.8	1	1.1
7.Police	1	0.4	0	
subtotal	6	2.2	1	1.1
C: INDUSTRY				
8.Shipbuilding	1	0.4	1	1.1
9.Engineering	8	2.9	2	2.2
10.Coalmining	5	1.8	1	1.1
11.Iron foundry	1	0.4	0	
12.Textile industry	3	1.1	0	
13.General factory/other	1	0.4	1	1.1
subtotal	19	7.0	5	5.5
D: MAINTENANCE AND CONSTRUCTION				
14.House-building/maintenance	24	8.8	9	10.0
15.Road/railway maintenance	7	2.6	3	3.3
subtotal	31	11.4	12	13.3
E: TRANSPORT				
16.Port transport	9	3.3	6	6.7
17.Railways	6	2.2	3	3.3
18.Sea transport	6	2.2	2	2.2
19.Messenger/porter	2	0.7	0	
20.General transport	14	5.1	4	4.4
subtotal	37	13.5	15	16.6

F: SKILLED RETAIL TRADES				
21.Tailor/dressmaker/ hatter/glover etc	7	2.6	2	2.2
22.Blacksmith	1	0.4	0	
23.Printer/compositor	5	1.8	0	
24.Toymaker	3	1.1	0	
25.Cobbler/shoemaker	13	4.8	5	5.6
26.Baker/butcher	5	1.8	0	
27.Hairdresser/barber	2	0.7	1	1.1
28.Other	8	2.9	2	2.2
subtotal	44	16.1	8	11.1
G: GENERAL RETAIL				
29.Specialised shopkeepers: grocer/draper/fishmonger	5	1.8	1	1.1
30.Small shopkeeper	1	0.4	0	
31.Shop assistant	0	0.0	0	
32.Travelling salesman	4	1.5	0	
33.Casual retail: hawker/costermonger/pedlar	6	2.2	5	5.6
subtotal	16	5.9	6	6.7
H: CATERING				
34.Publican/barmaid/waiter	8	2.9	2	2.2
35.Landlord/landlady	1	0.4	1	1.1
subtotal	9	3.3	3	3.3
I: SERVICE				
36.Caretaker	3	1.1	0	
37.Private domestic service: indoor	0		0	
38. outdoor	13	4.8	3	3.3
39. casual	4	1.5	2	2.2
subtotal	20	7.4	5	5.5
J: AGRICULTURAL				
40.Skilled agricultural worker	2	0.7	1	1.1
41.Agricultural labourer	11	4.1	4	4.4
42.Fisherman	1	0.4	0	
subtotal	14	5.2	5	5.5

K: ENTERTAINMENT

43.Actor/acrobat	0	0.0	0	
44.Musician	3	1.1	1	1.1
subtotal	3	1.1	1	1.1

L: GENERAL LABOUR

45.General labour	48	17.6	20	22.2
46.Casual earnings	7	2.6	4	4.4
47.Vagrant/tramp	3	1.1	1	1.1
48.Workhouse/pauper/asylum	4	1.5	0	
subtotal	62	22.8	12	27.7

TOTAL	273	100.0	90	100.0
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Not known 127

tended to swamp other occupations when work became available. Thus, for instance, 40% of cab-drivers only used their licenses in the more prosperous summer months, when they glutted the market, making it impossible for regular drivers to earn a steady wage. Shoemakers were not subject to such seasonal fluctuations; like many other skilled tradesmen, their inability to find regular work was a result of the competition from cheap factory-made substitutes for their wares. Even when wages were quite high, workers whose earnings were irregular found it difficult to earn enough to tide them over the days when they were unable to find employment. It is not surprising that few were able to provide adequately for their families in times of distress.

The prevalence of irregular or inadequate earnings may be evident in the sample group as a whole, but it is not really sufficient to explain why other parents applied to have their children admitted to the Waifs and Strays. As well as demonstrating the frequency of casual occupations among Waifs and Strays fathers, Table 6.3 also indicates an enormous diversity of employment. Although, as one might perhaps have predicted, the largest single group of fathers were general, unskilled labourers, several others were skilled tradesmen, established shopkeepers, and even white-collar workers. Only three of the fathers were described as vagrants or tramps. All but one of those described as indoor paupers were suffering from psychiatric disorders and confined to county asylums.

It is possible that some of the occupations given carry an exaggerated status, for many of those who sought admission felt it advisable to stress the respectability of the childrens' parents in order to emphasise

their superiority to workhouse children. Thus a Miss Ayerst applied for the admission of Herbert F. on the grounds that:

The antecedents of the families were of superior class - the grandfather of the boy was a Barrister and he is a very intelligent and good child. I am therefore very interested in him, and most anxious that he should be rescued from the workhouse, to which he must be sent, unless some means can be provided for his maintenance and the continuance of the education he merits (12).

Nevertheless, even allowing for some degree of bias, it is obvious that some of the parents were in steady, respectable occupations. Fathers in professional and managerial jobs, together with those in heavy industry or retail and catering trades, were not generally subject to the vagaries of casual employment. Many of them could also command reasonable wages. To understand why their children should have been admitted to the Waifs and Strays, a third factor, the extent of family breakdown, also needs to be considered.

Only 16 (4%) of the children in the sample were living with both parents at the time of admission; 177 (44%) fathers had died, while a further 103 (26%) had deserted their families before admission was sought. Of this latter group, 52 were the putative fathers of illegitimate children, most of whom had apparently lost touch with both child and mother before the Society was contacted.

The picture of occupations and earnings looks substantially different if absent fathers are excluded from the analysis. Only 90 fathers were known to be living with their families at the time of admission, though the large number whose whereabouts were uncertain suggests that the true figure may have been higher. Information about the incomes of 42 of these

men was recorded on the case-papers and is set out alongside the data on all the sample fathers in table 6.2. As many as 71% of co-resident fathers had incomes below the poverty line, and 44% were earning less than eighteen shillings per week. Their range of income, from 8s to 39s, was narrower than that of the complete group of sample fathers, and at 19s 5d, their average weekly wage was lower. Nevertheless, there were still four fathers earning 30s or more per week, whose circumstances will be considered in a subsequent chapter.

The occupations of most of those fathers who were still living with their families show a marked drift towards the lower end of the casual labour market, where only minimal skills were required. Thus, of the original sixteen fathers in retail occupations, only six were still present at the time of admission. All but one of those who remained were at the bottom end of the trade, earning a living by hawking their wares in the street or from door to door. Twenty-eight per cent of the co-resident fathers were general labourers or casual earners, while a further seventeen per cent were general transport workers. Many of these fathers could only marginally be described as able-bodied, and it may be for this reason that the Society felt able to admit their children. To accept too many children whose parents were manifestly capable of supporting them would have laid the Waifs and Strays open to the damaging charge that it encouraged irresponsibility.

By the time application was made to the Society, 66% of fathers in professional occupations had deserted their families. The long-term effects of irregular, ill-paid work had taken their toll, and a high

percentage of fathers in each of the four heavily casualised occupations noted above had died. The strain of attempting to support a family without a regular income is encapsulated in the recommendation that accompanied Albert B.'s application:

This year has been a very trying one for dock labourers and particularly so in the grain department in which [Albert's father] worked and I attribute his illness and death greatly to the anxiety he must have felt on behalf of his wife and children (13)

Albert's mother had been left with five children to support, none of whom were old enough to supplement the six shillings a week she was able to earn by taking in washing. Her situation was typical of that of the lone mothers in the sample, amongst whom the prevalence of casual, underpaid work was startlingly more apparent than in those families headed by fathers.

One hundred and fifty (38%) of the sample mothers were lone parents. Table 6.4 shows their occupations, while their earnings have been given alongside those of all the fathers on table 6.2. The occupations of 123 of these lone mothers were noted on the case-papers. By far the largest group of 74 mothers (60%) were in private domestic service: this is a considerably higher proportion than the 44% of working women over the age of fifteen who were in service in the population as a whole (14), and further supports the contention that the Society was dependent for its referrals upon the relationship between middle class women and their servants or other subordinates.

Although the wages of the 36 mothers in residential domestic service were low (average: 6s 1d), they also received board and lodging. By living as

TABLE 6.4

OCCUPATIONS OF LONE MOTHERS
(Waifs and Strays data 1887-1894: 123 cases)

	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
A: PROFESSIONAL, MANAGERIAL		
2.Teaching	2	1.6
3.Clerk	1	0.8
4.Nursing	4	3.3
subtotal	7	5.7
C: INDUSTRY		
13.General Factory/Other	1	0.8
subtotal	1	0.8
F: SKILLED RETAIL TRADES		
21.Tailor/Dressmaker/Hatter/Glover etc	9	7.3
28.Other	3	2.4
subtotal	12	9.7
G: GENERAL RETAIL		
30.Small shopkeeper	0	0.0
31.Shop assistant	1	0.8
33.Casual retail:		
Hawker/Costermonger/Pedlar	1	0.8
subtotal	2	1.6
H: CATERING		
34.Publican/Barmaid/Waiter	1	0.8
35.Landlord/Landlady	6	4.9
subtotal	7	5.7
I: SERVICE		
36.Caretaker/Institutional service	3	2.4
37.Private Domestic Service:Indoor	36	29.3
39. Casual	38	30.9
subtotal	77	62.6
L: GENERAL LABOUR		
45.Casual earnings	5	4.1
46.Vagrant/Tramp/Prostitute	8	6.5
47.Workhouse/pauper/asylum	4	3.3
subtotal	17	13.9
TOTAL:	123	100.00
Not known:	27	

part of a middle class household, a domestic servant avoided the worst deprivations suffered by those who had to find their own food and accommodation. Servants' food was often monotonous and insubstantial, but it can hardly have failed to better the scraps with which lone mothers living in the community attempted to stave off starvation. For this reason, I have followed Rowntree's lead in analysing the condition of indoor domestic servants separately from that of the other mothers in the sample.

Many of the washerwomen and charladies in casual service were widows with several children to support. Other lone mothers were in the type of home-based occupation such as dressmaking or catering from which it was possible to supervise a family. Only six lone mothers were known to be prostitutes, and two more were living in rescue homes. These figures do not support the popular argument that the majority of parents were disreputable or unfit, and indeed, at the other end of the scale, an almost equally large proportion of mothers were in eminently respectable white-collar jobs such as teaching or clerical work. The reasons why these educated women, in steady jobs with above-average earnings, applied to have their children admitted to the Society, will be considered later.

Table 6.2 above sets out the wages of 62 lone mothers who were not in domestic service. Only one of them, a teacher, earned more than the 21s 8d Rowntree regarded as the minimum income needed by a family to avoid destitution. Twenty-four (38%) earned less than the five shillings per week regarded by the Waifs and Strays as the sum needed to support each child in their care. Indeed, the average wage of the group as a whole

was as little as six shillings per week, one penny less than the cash earnings of the lone mothers in residential service. Seventeen of these mothers claimed to earn nothing.

Twenty-six of these lone mothers in the community received outdoor relief in cash to supplement their income: these payments appear to have been somewhat erratic, and varied considerably from one union to another, a point later noted by the poor law commissioners of 1909 (15). The sums received ranged from 1s 6d paid in Gloucestershire to Mrs. R. whose only other reliable source of weekly income for herself and eight children living at home was the 2s earned by an older child, to the 9s paid by a Welsh union to Mrs O. who had been widowed with four children under ten (16). In an attempt to ensure that the money was not wasted, outdoor relief was sometimes given in kind: nineteen mothers received groceries instead of, or as a supplement, to small sums of money. Mrs R., noted above, received six loaves in addition to her 1s 6d per week. The guardians were legally prohibited from making long-term settlements, and thus outdoor relief could not be depended upon as a permanent source of income. Albert B. and Henrietta E., for instance, were admitted to the Society when the three months relief granted to the family on their father's death, came to an end (17). Some of the mothers who gave details of both wages and outdoor relief would not have received both sums concomitantly, and thus if the two sums are added, their total income is likely to be an overestimate. Nevertheless, even with these inflated figures, the aggregate incomes still only amounted to an average weekly sum of eight shillings. Few unions would grant outdoor relief to

unmarried mothers, for fear of encouraging immorality. Only one unmarried mother in the sample received outdoor relief, and that was 'a very little' ; other families, like the L's , whose mother had had four illegitimate children since her husband died, were simply left to subsist in 'the greatest misery and destitution' until they were forced to enter the workhouse (18).

Although their families were not particularly large by the standards of the day, the financial situation of many of these mothers was exacerbated by the number and ages of their children. Rowntree calculated from the 1901 census figures that the average family in England and Wales contained 4.61 children (19); the average family size in the sample as a whole was 4.0 children. As many as 48 (47%) of the lone mothers living at home had fewer than four children to support. There were, however, twelve mothers who had families of seven or more. It is also extremely likely that a large number of these families would have experienced the death of a child: the case-papers do not record this information, but Rowntree found that in the poorest area of York one child in four did not live to see its first birthday (20).

Obviously, families where there were older children who could contribute to the joint income were better off than those where there were numerous very young children who were not only unable to make a financial contribution themselves, but also diverted the mother's energies from providing for their support. Only 71 (62%) of the families headed by a lone mother living at home had older children whose wages might be assumed to have been added to the family purse; in 24 of these families there was

no recorded income from an older child. In a further 37 families, all the children were under the age of ten, and therefore likely to be entirely dependent upon their mother. Very few older children living at home earned more than their own keep.

It thus seems clear that many of the families in the Waifs and Strays sample had strong financial reasons for handing over the care of their children to third parties. In fact, it is difficult to understand how many of them would have survived without doing so. The data illustrate Rowntree's conclusion that the greatest single cause of poverty was the absence or incapacity of the chief (male) wage-earner, and that this condition was exacerbated by the number and ages of their children (21). Many of the lone mothers, in particular, had insufficient incomes to maintain themselves, let alone their children, 'in a state of bare physical efficiency'. By offering to take over the care of a child, the Society was not pandering to parental fecklessness so much as meeting an obvious need.

Practical Reasons for Admission

For one group of parents there were strong practical as well as financial reasons for requesting admission for their children. These were the parents for whom substitute care was a condition of their employment. Some of the single fathers, such as Mr T., a sailor, who was away from home for weeks at a time, come into this category (22). Many of the occupations open to women in the nineteenth century carried a residential requirement. Shop assistants and apprentice dressmakers, as well as

servants, were frequently obliged to live in. However, amongst the parents in the sample, the only large group who were regularly obliged to live on the job were the 36 mothers in indoor residential service.

It has already been suggested that, even though they were often poorly housed and fed, the material circumstances of lone mothers in service were almost invariably an improvement on the condition of those who were struggling to cope in the outside community. However, employers did not as a rule allow their servants to be accompanied by children. Moreover, there were no restrictions on the number of hours that servants worked, with the result that some had very little time free to visit those family members from whom they were separated.

Most mothers in service were obliged to find alternative accommodation for their children. The average earnings of the 36 lone mothers in indoor service in the sample was 6s 1d (23). Although food and lodging were free, women in service were obliged to save for periods of sickness and unemployment and provide their own uniforms. Those who could not present a neat appearance were likely to lose their jobs. Very few foster parents charged less than 3s 6d per week. Thus unless an obliging relative could be found who would agree to take the children for a nominal sum, the occupation was closed to most women with more than one, or at the outside two, children to support.

Twenty of the mothers in indoor service had one or two children. The remainder had from three to seven, though several of these were old enough to have left home. The majority of their dependent children had already been placed in the care of relatives, private foster parents or

other charities before application was made to the Society. One family of three children of whom the eldest was eleven, had been left to care for themselves when their mother took up a residential post (24). The sample children came into the care of the Society either when arrangements broke down or when a mother who had not previously been in service, needed to find substitute care in order to enable her to take up a situation. In order to lessen the chances of desertion, mothers who had been forced to enter the workhouse were not allowed to leave, even to take up employment, unless their children were discharged at the same time. Four of the sample children came into the care of the Waifs and Strays in order to allow their mothers to leave the workhouse for residential service jobs; two of these children were immediately emigrated.

Although the majority of servants' children were not living with their mothers at the time of application to the Society, three women had found employers who had agreed to accommodate them. Two of these women were working as housekeepers in what appear to have been fairly rough households in which they earned little more than board and lodging for themselves and their families. However, the third was working as a cook in a middle-class household headed by a cousin of the referee. The mother was a battered wife; when she had left her husband, her employer had offered a temporary home to her together with her three children, and had since used her influence to drum up financial support for her in the neighbourhood (25).

This latter case is of particular interest because the employer was prepared to put herself to some considerable inconvenience for the family

concerned. Although many employers guaranteed the parents' payments, and arranged for their children's admission to the Society, very few appear to have empathised with their predicament. This point becomes strikingly apparent when one examines the relationship between wages and the amount of maintenance demanded by the Society. Apart from the single fathers, the mothers in service were the only major group of parents who agreed to pay the Society at least a proportion of the cost of their children's maintenance. Of the 41 mothers who contributed to their child's support, 21 (54%) were in residential service, while a further five (13%) had casual, non-residential occupations in the same sector. Eleven of their employers agreed to deduct the sums from their wages. Yet employers appear to have remained unconcerned that low wages meant that some mothers were paying out ninety or even a hundred per cent of their incomes in maintenance charges. William Walsham How, 'the Children's Bishop' was by all accounts a gentle, saintly man. In 1893 he referred the son of his widowed cook to the Society, stating that: 'if the Committee fix a certain sum to be paid, the mother will, with the help of her relatives, undertake to pay it. In fixing the sum the Committee should remember that the mother has two other young children to maintain.' He appears to have been unaware that a major reason for her financial predicament was that he was only paying her 7s 1d per week. In the event the committee felt obliged to accept this child as a free case (26). The Society's policy on parental payments will be considered in greater detail in a later chapter.

Most employers came from the same social group as the local organisers of the Society, and indeed there was considerable overlap between them. It

is not, therefore, surprising that many of them saw a situation in terms of the Society's needs rather than from the point of view of their employees. Thus employers were always concerned to see that maintenance money was duly paid, and tended to object if a mother left her situation, even if she needed to improve her income. Two of the mothers in the sample removed their children from Waifs and Strays' foster parents because they were concerned about the quality of care. While one employer made no objections, the other did all she could to distance herself from what she considered to be an ill-judged, and possibly ungrateful, move: Rene-Marie le G.'s mother was another wife who had left her husband because of his ill-treatment. She found a job as a cook, and her employer arranged for her child to be admitted to the Society. When the first foster placement broke down, the employer found a replacement and even wrote to the Society suggesting a list of possible supervisors. The mother became anxious that the child was not growing properly, and eventually, with her mistress's approbation, took him to a doctor who diagnosed 'rickets and debility due to improper feeding and bad air'. She removed him immediately and placed him with private foster parents. Although the employer was well aware of the reasons for this precipitate action, she wrote to the Society:

[The mother] is most headstrong and self-willed not asking my advice and not likely to follow it if I were to give any to her. I do not know what to do surely something might be done to prevent her taking away her child from under the society's care in that off-hand manner. I am truly sorry to have entirely innocently been the cause of this very unpleasant business (27).

Although both the mother and the Society claimed that no more than two weeks maintenance was owed to the foster mother, her employer insisted

that seven weeks money was owed. Presumably this was reclaimed from the mother's wages.

This employer may well have felt that she had acquired the right to dominate the actions of Mrs le G. because she had rescued her from a predicament of her own making: by voluntarily leaving her husband she had placed herself in a vulnerable position, where her respectability could no longer be guaranteed. While twelve of the mothers in domestic service were respectable widows, six were deserted or separated wives, and a further eighteen (50%) were the unmarried mothers of illegitimate children. Deserted and separated wives were vulnerable to accusations of immorality, but unmarried mothers had lost their claim to respectability. For this latter group, in particular, there were social, as well as practical reasons for placing their children in substitute care.

Social Reasons for Admission

Although many of the Waifs and Strays parents were poverty-stricken, the above analysis does also suggest that not all of those who requested admission were financially unable to support their children. Seventy (20%, n=351) of the sample children were illegitimate. Their case-papers demonstrate how the deliberate stigmatisation of their status provided parents with a powerful incentive to relinquish their care.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the stigmatisation of illegitimacy was used as a means of inculcating a particular mode of behaviour. Women who broke this code were ostracised, together with their children, by those who wished to reinforce a norm of respectable morality. Regardless of

the circumstances under which her child had been conceived, the unmarried mother invariably lost her claim to respectability. Her own relatives had every incentive to distance themselves from her: not only could maternal grandparents be held liable for a child's support, but also, relatives who stood by an unmarried mother risked being charged with condoning a social crime.

The legal need for corroborative evidence, introduced under the New Poor Law of 1834, made it easy for putative fathers to escape the financial responsibility for their actions. The belief that the forced marriages of earlier centuries had degraded the sacrament of matrimony allowed them to avoid the social consequences (28). Those men who admitted paternity could be treated with much more leniency than the mothers: Katie R. was the illegitimate daughter of a domestic servant and a doctor's assistant. Her mother was obliged to enter Chelsea workhouse for the confinement, and then, only three weeks after the birth, to take up employment as a cook. For six years she supported Katie unaided, handing over 50% of her wages to those who provided substitute care, while the court order requiring the father to contribute was delayed so that he might continue to train for his chosen career (29). An illegitimate child was very clearly left to be 'what Providence appears to have ordained that it should be, a burthen on its mother, and, where she cannot maintain it, on her parents (30).

And burdens they undoubtedly were. I have already demonstrated that the mothers of illegitimate children were almost invariably denied outdoor relief. Nor was it easy for many of them to find work. Employers could enforce their own code of 'respectability' by refusing work not only to

those whom they considered immoral, but also to their immediate relatives. John L. was one of four illegitimate children born to a widow. His two legitimate half-siblings had only obtained situations 'on condition of holding no intercourse of any kind with their mother'. John was finally admitted to the Society at the age of thirteen, after he had allegedly had a hard struggle to keep honest through the winter, 'his mother's immoral life preventing the farmers about here giving the boy employment' (31).

Unmarried mothers therefore had to choose between entering the workhouse or placing their children in substitute care while they sought employment, preferably somewhere where their antecedents were unknown. Reputable substitute care was not easy to find: many institutions refused to admit illegitimate children for fear of encouraging immorality. Others presented the mother with a lengthy application form and a semi-legal contract which bound her to pay a considerable proportion of the child's keep. Private foster parents were the cheapest, but even at 3s 6d per week substitute care was expensive; thus the illegitimate child proved a financial as well as a social burden.

Faced with this double handicap, the more ruthless did all they could to abandon their children or hasten their early deaths. The infant mortality rate was well-known to be significantly greater amongst the illegitimate than among children who had been born in wedlock (32). The evidence given to the Select Committee on the Protection of Infant Life, together with the baby-farming scandals of the seventies and nineties, make it clear that in some circles it was accepted practice for unscrupulous parents to

hand over their children anonymously to disreputable foster parents for a nominal fee, both parties being aware that the death of one more baby from 'marasmus' or 'debility' would pass unnoticed among the already high infant mortality figures (33). The sample data contain little evidence to corroborate the popular image of the private foster parent as an accessory to infanticide (see below), but it does appear that they were more gullible than the secretaries of rescue homes, and had little hope of tracing parents who had left them literally holding the baby. Nearly 19% of the children admitted to the Society from private foster homes had been deserted by both parents.

Illegitimacy was so effectively stigmatised that those who were unable or unwilling to abandon the children concerned often took bizarre measures to obscure the relationship. Several of the mothers in professional jobs asked Rudolf not to inform their employers of their children's existence (34). When Malcolm W. was five years old his mother discharged him from the Society. The summer before he returned to her care she carefully taught him to address her in future as Miss. W. She was an assistant schoolmistress, and would, presumably, have lost her job if the true relationship had been discovered (35). Children were occasionally found who had been kept hidden from the world so that their families might escape the social consequences of their birth: Daniel P., who was returned from a private foster-home to his grandmother when she became unable to pay for his support, was 'kept within doors and the backyard', so that the neighbours would not see him. The grandmother was afraid of losing her job if financial constraints forced her to hand him over to the guardians,

even though her occupation was that of 'missionary woman' (36).

One of the saddest cases in the sample is that of Frank C., whose mother, though 'more sinned against than sinning', was cut off by her relations when she became pregnant. Though determined to preserve her own respectability by keeping her distance from her daughter, the grandmother was nevertheless unable to ignore her grandson's existence. After his admission she wrote to Rudolf:

Tho' I have forgiven my daughter the wrong done us all - yet my sympathy has gone out to the poor boy most of all and now I feel at peace about him. I will ask you dear sir to be his Guardian and friend and at my death half of my P.O. insurance £100 viz £50 will be paid you and your heirs for the poor child's benefit. I shall like to know where he is placed and now and then how he gets on. I do not desire he should know his relationship to me but I will always feel deeply interested in his well-being here and pray for him that he may grow up a good man (37, her emphasis).

Years later, when the mother got into difficulties with her payments, her relations paid off her arrears - through a solicitor so that she would not discover their involvement (38).

These elaborate schemes to obscure the relationship served inevitably to confuse the children concerned. Like other children whose antecedents are doubtful, when they reached adulthood, they sometimes became obsessed with the need for clarification (39). Lily J., who spent fourteen years under the protection of the Society, wrote to Rudolf on the eve of her marriage:

I believe I am illegitimate - what was my mother - I have heard some say she was a cook, some say an actress - which is right. My father who was he - was he a gentleman? was he anyone very dreadful?

You of course have both proper and nice parents and can have no idea how awful it is to be like me.

And again, two weeks later:

I used to receive letters from an Aunt Nelly - have you
any record of her? That was when I was quite small...
(40)

Parr suggests that such requests were simply ignored by the Barnardo administration (41). The Waifs and Strays appears to have had a more open policy, and a reply was usually sent, though there was little attempt to deal sensitively with difficult issues. Lily J. was flatly told: 'The aunt who used to write to you was apparently your own mother' (42).

These relations all adopted such contortionate courses of action in order to preserve their own social status. However, among those who had no claims to respectability, illegitimacy was not necessarily considered to be such a disgrace. Booth pointed out, as Mayhew had discovered forty years previously, that in some areas of London, marriage was not fashionable: men and women lived together in stable relationships without benefit of clergy and without necessarily incurring the opprobrium of their neighbours. The stigma was produced by the reactions of those who considered themselves their superiors (43).

However, the voluntary societies were respectability personified. As is abundantly evident, they saw one of their major roles as being to civilise the unruly children of the poor. When the relatives of illegitimate children approached a voluntary society they sometimes encountered the stigmatisation which had so far been avoided. Thus Mabel R. and her two siblings only entered the Waifs and Strays after they had been hastily discharged from another orphanage because, after their parents' death, the validity of the marriage license found amongst their

papers was called into question (44).

Less than half (46%) of the illegitimate children in the sample had no siblings and might have been described as the single children of respectable girls. In fact, only sixteen (4%) of the sample children were admitted on the sole ground of their having a mother who was 'striving to retrieve her character'. Most of their mothers had had more than one child, though not all of these were illegitimate: the number of children in their families ranged from one to eleven.

Information is available about forty-two (60%) of these mothers, many of the remainder having died or deserted their children well before they were referred to the Society. Five of them were in respectable, 'professional' occupations, where they kept their previous history carefully concealed. Twenty-one were in some form of domestic service, and a further four were in the workhouse or rescue homes, training to become servants. Only three mothers of illegitimate children were prostitutes at the time of the child's admission, although two more had been rescued from a life on the streets.

Unmarried Mothers in Domestic Service

The unmarried mothers in domestic service are of particular interest. Only three of them were casual servants such as charwomen or washerwomen; all the others were housemaids, parlourmaids, cooks, housekeepers, children's nurses and so on: indoor servants who were required to live on the job. Perhaps it is not surprising that so many of these girls went into service: after all many of them were very young, and it is

obvious from the 1891 census figures that this was the most readily available occupation for women under the age of twenty (45). However, there were other considerations: an unmarried mother was seen to have lost her claim to respectability. Her vulnerability meant that she was amongst the very few disreputable adults who might feasibly be 'saved', both materially and spiritually, through contact with a respectable, middle-class household. The refuges and penitentiaries in which many of these girls spent their confinement, offered a deeply religious and disciplined regime. The households which were prepared to offer them employment provided a civilising environment in which, through hard work and good behaviour, a lost character might be regained.

Only one residential employer of an unmarried mother allowed her to bring her children with her, and in this instance the disreputable nature of the household was the ground for admission to the Society (46). As has previously been indicated, it was extremely uncommon for respectable employers to allow indoor servants to be accompanied by their children. Thus by arranging residential employment in a middle-class household for the mother, and admission to a voluntary society for the child, a referrer might consider both parties to be saved. Moreover, the arrangement ensured that the child's relationship with a mother whose character was, de facto, questionable, might be carefully regulated.

Seven of these mothers were referred by unattached 'parish ladies', two by deaconesses, and two by employers who came from the same social background as the Society's referral agents; indeed, there was some overlap between the groups. Employers could often be relied upon to

guarantee the mother's payments while she was a member of their household: on the one hand it was considered to be part of the mother's reclamation that she should exercise self-denial in working for her child, while on the other hand, the Society benefitted from the knowledge that payments were likely to be regular. Albert J.'s referrer wrote that she:

Can testify that [the mother] has conducted herself with great satisfaction in the two places she has had since [her confinement]. She has done all she could to retrieve her character and has been most punctual in her payment for the child. She has also paid into a doctor's club for him and insured his life, denying herself , for the purpose, of many necessaries.

On account of these circumstances and the creditable manner in which she has conducted herself, her late mistress,...has consented to receive the payment of four shilling a week, and to forward it quarterly to the society of the Waifs and Strays...' (47).

Judgmental attitudes such as the above ensured that the relationship between referrer, employer and unmarried mother was as unbalanced as that between referrer, parent and child. Just as parents were rarely considered to have shown sufficient gratitude to those who had rescued their children, so did unmarried mothers in service fail to show due appreciation for their own salvation. And who can blame them? Most had spent less than a month with their children before being forced to place them in substitute care so that they could earn enough money for their support. Their average wages were only 5s 2d, of which the Society generally took 4s per child. Their employers' involvement made it difficult to default. Many of them must have felt trapped by a lifetime of service to a child they scarcely knew, and whose existence they probably resented.

On the other hand, it is difficult to avoid the suspicion that some

employers and sponsors felt that their magnanimity in overlooking the mother's offence entitled them to an exceptional standard of loyalty. The two most exploited servants in the sample were unmarried mothers: Ernest H's mother, who lived less than ten miles from his foster-home, was only able to visit him once in the week before he died, 'being nurse to a very young baby' (48). On January 1st 1897, Charles C's mother wrote to Rudolf:

You seem to forget that I am in service and cannot get out at any time. I shall not have another opportunity of going out again until the day I leave which will be next Saturday week, the 9th January. I fail to see why you so particularly wish to see me at the office before I take my son away. If I had a chance of coming I would certainly come but I do not see the least chance of my coming as I have a great deal to do and think about and my mistress will not allow me to go out I know as there is so much work to do (49).

While the mother may have been expected to show exceptional loyalty to those who had saved her, the arrangement was not necessarily reciprocal. As a rule employers refused to guarantee payments if the mother left their service; nor were relatives and friends generally prepared to continue support after the original sponsor had died or lost interest (50).

The case of Agnes A. sums up the position of many unmarried mothers in the Waifs and Strays sample. Her mother became pregnant while working as a general servant. Less than a month after the birth her employers wrote to the Society, offering to take the mother back if a foster home could be found for the child, and stating that 'with regard to the payment, I do not think that the mother can afford to pay more than two shillings per week, which I am willing to guarantee shall be paid while she is in my service'. Her employer was well aware that she could not pay more because he only gave her three shillings a week wages; however Rudolf refused to

take the child unless the normal four shillings could be guaranteed. Since Agnes was eventually admitted on these terms, it must be assumed that her mother's wages were increased, though it seems probable that she was obliged to hand over virtually all her earnings to the Society. When Agnes died a year later 'the mother came to the funeral...but evidently the death of her child is no sorrow to her'(51).

Personal Pressures

As well as the pressures which came from their financial position, their occupational requirements and their status, several parents also found that individual friends, relatives and acquaintances were urging them to agree to allow their children to be admitted to the Society. In only a few cases was pressure overt and concrete. For instance, when William and Alfred S.'s stepmother was found guilty of ill-treating them, the judge offered her a lighter sentence if their father agreed to renounce his claim to their future custody (52). In the main, however, an assessment of the extent to which parents were pressurised into consenting to admission must remain largely subjective. The following analysis must therefore be treated with some caution.

In addition to the 32 cases in which children were committed to the Society, 23 (6%) of the parents were clearly pressurised into agreeing to admission, while in a further 72 (18%) cases, those who referred the child were so convinced that separation was necessary, that some degree of persuasion was implied.

Three parents were threatened with legal proceedings or more severe

sentences if they refused their consent to admission. Two single mothers were offered jobs on condition they placed the child in a separate home. In six cases the child's relatives or guardians arranged the admission without, apparently, consulting the parent, and in another case, a widow's relatives offered her and her children a home on condition that she found alternative accommodation for a step-child. In the remaining 84 cases an overt attempt to persuade a parent to agree to separation was either made or implied. Thus in Annie R.'s case, as soon as her father gave his consent 'without which we could not act', an application was made to the Society. The referrer, who was the local vicar, hoped 'to get the little girl at any rate out of his clutches' before the family left the workhouse and her father had time to change his mind (53).

As was explicitly spelt out on the specialised form for admission to Connaught House (training home), neither the parents nor the children themselves were expected to apply directly to the Society (54). Eight of the parents of voluntary children were illiterate and may therefore have been unclear as to the nature of the application made on behalf of their child: certainly some parents later used their imperfect understanding as an excuse to withdraw their consent to emigration (55). Many other parents had no more than a minor role to play in the application, and it seems likely that the concerns expressed on the case-papers were often those of the referrer rather than of the child or the nearest relatives. One child, referred by a clergyman and his wife, came with the recommendation that: 'Canon Danks' daughter has taken a great interest in Annie [H]. and it is her wish that she should be

trained for service'.

We do not know what Annie's parents thought about the matter, but they had recently been confirmed , and were thus perhaps particularly open to advice from the local clergy. Moreover, Canon Danks was prepared to pay the full cost of Annie's training, at least for her first year in the Society's care (56). Many other referrers who were anxious to ensure that children were admitted to the Society, offered to pay towards their support. Eighty-three of the children (38% n=228) were maintained, at least in part, by the person who referred them for admission, and in 33 of these cases there is some evidence that the parent was pressurised into giving consent. In the latter group of cases, five of the referrers were the parents' employers, two were the local clergy, and twenty (64%) were middle-class parish ladies, involved in church work among the poor.

Thus almost all the referrers who were prepared to back up their advice with a financial incentive had a personal relationship with the parents. They were also their acknowledged superiors. It must have been extremely difficult for any parent who was reluctant to give consent, to withstand pressure from such a source, particularly at a time when one's job or one's home or even one's social standing within a neighbourhood, might be dependent on the goodwill of the local gentry.

Some of the parents who placed their children with the Waifs and Strays did fit the popular stereotype of fecklessness and irresponsibility. Walter and Herbert F.'s mother married a man who was London manager for an international publisher. Both she and her husband were working, and they

could easily have afforded to have the children to live with them. Instead they remained in the care of the Society, unsupported by their parents who evaded all bills (57). However, such cases were extremely rare. The majority of parents were faced with severe financial, practical or social problems which were all alleviated by the removal of a child. Many of them were encouraged to agree to this step by those whose advice they were accustomed to take; in one or two instances the advice was little short of blackmail. It would not therefore be surprising to find that the Society was overwhelmed with urgent requests for permanent admission. The following chapter considers whether this was in fact the case.

CHAPTER SEVEN: PARENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS ADMISSION

In view of the extent of the financial and practical problems described above, it is not surprising to find that many parents had been obliged to seek assistance from a variety of sources before applying to the Society. In many instances the Waifs and Strays was the last of a long line of relatives, friends and charitable agencies who had all offered support prior to the application for admission. Faced with intolerable pressures, many of the families had disintegrated long before the Society was approached. Only 127 (45%) of the children who were known to have a parent alive were actually living with them at the time of admission to the Society - and only sixteen of these were living with both their parents. In families headed by a lone mother, the percentage of sample children living at home was 46%. Although 66% of sample children had previously been separated for six months or less, taken as a whole, the group had spent an average of sixteen months apart from their parents immediately prior to admission. Table 7.1 gives details of the homes of all the sample children (including orphans) and of their siblings at the time of admission. Table 7.2 shows the number of months sample children had been separated from both their parents before entering the Society's care.

The children appear to fall into three distinct groups of roughly similar size. One hundred and thirty-two (35%) were admitted directly from their parents' homes; 100 (26%) were cared for by relatives or private

TABLE 7.1

DOMICILE AT ADMISSION
(Waifs and Strays sample data 1887-1894: 380 cases)

<u>DOMICILE OF CHILD AT ADMISSION</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Living with both parents:	16	4.2
Living with one parent:	116	30.5
In the care of relatives/friends:	63	16.6
Privately fostered:	37	9.7
In a home taken over by the society:	29	7.6
In a home run by another voluntary organisation:	44	11.6
In a workhouse/district school	37	9.7
Other	38	10.0
TOTAL:		380
Not known:		20
		100.0

<u>DOMICILE OF SIBLINGS AT CHILD'S ADMISSION</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Living with parent(s)	376	45.1
Married with commitments of their own:	43	5.1
Unmarried, but grown up and left home:	138	16.6
In the care of relatives/friends:	90	10.8
Privately fostered:	17	2.0
'Legally' adopted:	6	0.7
In industrial school/reformatory/prison:	12	1.4
In workhouse/district school/other Poor Law care:	45	5.4
In the care of other voluntary societies/hospitals:	72	8.6
Emigrated:	14	1.7
Already in the care of the Waifs and Strays:	20	2.4
TOTAL:		833
		100.0

TABLE 7.2

LENGTH OF SEPARATION PRIOR TO ADMISSION
(Waifs and Strays sample data 1887-1894: 295 cases)

<u>SEPARATION</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Under six months:	194	65.7
7-12 months:	21	7.1
13-24 months:	19	6.4
25-36 months:	11	3.7
37-48 months:	7	2.4
48-60 months:	10	3.4
Over five years:	33	11.2
TOTAL:		295
Not known:		105
		100.0

Mean period of separation prior to admission: 16.5 months
Standard deviation: 30.1

foster parents immediately prior to admission; and a further 110 (29%) were admitted directly from other forms of institutional care.

Children in the latter group came into the Society's care as a result of administrative change rather than through pressures in their individual families. The large number of children in this group reflects the extent of the Society's growth during this period, and the increasingly strong links it was building with other organisations. Many of these children had lost touch with their parents several years before they came to the Society's attention: 27% of them had been separated from their families for over five years, and 26% were orphans. Information about their antecedents had often been lost by the time the transfer was effected; although the matron of the home or the original referrer was expected to contact relatives to inform them of the change in the child's circumstances, it seems likely that this only rarely happened. When the certified home at Penkridge was transferred to the Society, a Miss Moore wrote to ask if it was really necessary for her to fill in a new application form for Elizabeth R., whose case she had referred some years previously. By then, the child had been separated from her parents for seven years; although her father had now recovered from the serious illness which had originally precipitated the admission, and both parents were respectable people who could afford to contribute to her support, 'it seemed such a pity for the child not to be away a little longer and go straight into service, after having such a careful training which is very different to Bethnal Green life'. Although Miss Moore claimed that the real difficulty lay in explaining to the parents why the form needed to be

filled in, her letter contains the strong implication that it would be wiser to let sleeping dogs lie rather than risk precipitating a premature discharge (1). Her fears may, perhaps, have proved well-founded: there is some evidence to suggest that relatives who were happy to place children in small private homes 'felt degraded' when they heard they were to become Waifs and Strays (2).

Family and Community Support

Anderson has argued that kinship relationships in nineteenth century Lancashire were characterised by 'strong, short-run instrumental overtones of a calculative kind': under conditions of extreme poverty, relationships which did not obviously serve the immediate interests of both parties were often disregarded (3). He suggests that the traditional solidarity of working-class communities observed by twentieth century commentators did not arise until economic conditions had improved, and, specifically, a comprehensive welfare system had freed kin from the financial burdens imposed by dependent relatives (4). Anderson's data are drawn from the period 1830-1865; the Waifs and Strays sample children entered the Society a generation later, between 1887 and 1894. Although overall, the economic condition of the working classes had begun to improve by this period, the children's families were almost all verging on destitution: one might therefore expect that their relationships with both neighbours and with kin would have displayed the same emphasis on calculative reciprocity observed by Anderson. However, the Waifs and Strays data suggest that although kinship and community relationships were

sometimes restricted by economic calculations, many families and neighbours nevertheless offered a degree of support that far exceeded that which might have been determined by considerations of their own short-term self-interest.

The large number of children who had been placed with relatives or friends prior to admission to the Society, indicates that a high degree of support could be expected from the wider family in times of crisis. When parents died, their children were often divided up between various relatives, most of whom had barely enough money to keep their own families together. Occasionally, as in the case of six of the sample children's siblings, an aunt or uncle would 'adopt' a child, taking over all responsibility for him. Although she already had eight children of her own, Robert S.'s aunt looked after him and his sister for several years while his mother went out to service; he was only admitted because the landlord had begun to complain about their overcrowded cottage. A year later, when Robert was discharged because his new stepfather refused to contribute towards his maintenance, his aunt renewed her offer of a home, although her husband only earned ten shillings a week (5).

Although there is evidence that many relatives were extremely supportive, there were some who clearly wished to avoid responsibility for members of their extended family. Relatives who handed over to the Society money bequeathed to provide for the care of children, occasionally demanded a written undertaking that they would not in the future be called upon to resume custody, thus supporting the contention that some kin relationships were fundamentally calculative (6). Some relatives, like

some parents, were blatantly cruel, and others appeared to resent the children to whom they felt obliged to offer a home. The literary stereotype of the orphaned charity child, taken in and exploited by a resentful aunt, clearly had its basis in reality: May O. and her brother were shunned by their relatives until they became old enough to be of some use to them; Mary H, who had been cared for by her uncles when her mother became ill, was considered to be used as 'a little drudge' by her aunt. It was her mother's dying wish that she be removed to the Society's care (7).

Many other relatives were both supportive and disinterested, although arrangements made between family members often proved to be of extremely short duration. Nearly half (49%) of the children admitted from the care of relatives had been separated from their parents for less than six months; 71% had been separated for less than a year. The time these children had spent apart from their parents prior to admission was significantly less than that spent by children who had been previously fostered or placed in other forms of institutional care ($p < 0.0001$). Relatives were often in the same financial predicament as parents. It seems likely that the presence of yet another child overstretched the resources of many families to an intolerable degree, especially if the arrangement was extended over a lengthy period. However, relatives tended to respond to the conflicting demands of economic stringency and family cohesion not by calculating the possibilities of reciprocity so much as by limiting the group to whom they offered support. Thus when a crisis loomed, extended families often excluded children who were not blood

relatives from their offers of assistance. Similarly, offers to provide a home for a bereaved child tended to be withdrawn if the relation by marriage objected to the additional strain on a family's already meagre resources. The letter Leonard J.'s older sister wrote concerning his admission describes a typical situation:

we had the misfortune of loosing our mother. It as come hard upon me. I had to borrow money for the funeral and mourning for all. Mother left four children at home. One girl I have with me training her for service. Another girl I want to get to service but owing to her outfit I am unable to get her a place. There are two little ones. My married sister offers to take one (the girl) if I can get the Boy away. Her husband is only a Bricklayer's labourer. His wages is so little that he can't afford to maintain the children any longer he offers to look well after the little girl and offer the two girls a home when they are out of situation and cannot keep the Boy he say if I don't get the Boy away he will not do anything more for the children. My married brother say he will not do anything to help us with them he as a wife and two children. His wife strongly refuses to have anyhing to do with the little one. I am in service and heavy in debt, but offer to pay 4/- per month that is as much as I can pay (8).

Thus, while the evidence confirms that in the many instances where parents could no longer care for their children, they could expect considerable support from extended families, it also suggests that this could be grudgingly offered and confined to children who were related by blood. Perhaps relatives felt constrained by their recognised legal and moral obligations towards each other: they may well have been reluctant to admit liability for fear that poor law officials would insist that they continued to maintain a child whom they could not afford (9).

The sample data do, however, provide evidence of extensive support for dependent children from unrelated friends and neighbours. Thus Richard M. was given lodgings by his elder brother's landlady when his parents died,

and Alice and Catherine B. were offered a home by a family friend (10). In both these cases the Society felt able to strengthen the placement by paying maintenance to those who had given the children a home, an offer which would have been politically contentious had it been made to relatives who were legally responsible for the children concerned. One could argue that in such instances the support was offered by foster parents who hoped to benefit by the maintenance provided by the Society: however, the extensive support given to some children by private foster parents, before application was made to the Waifs and Strays suggests that arrangements made with unrelated third parties were by no means invariably mercenary.

Private Foster Parents

Thirty-seven children had been previously placed in private foster homes before admission to the Society. They fall into two distinct groups: the five children who had been separated from their parents for less than six months prior to admission had been found emergency substitute care by referrers who were waiting for a decision from the Society; however, it is the group of thirty-two children who spent an extended period in private foster care prior to admission whose circumstances are of particular interest.

Private foster parents who accepted children on a long-term basis were almost invariably extremely poor people who were prepared to offer their services for very little reward. In some instances they had answered an advertisement and received a child from a stranger whom they never saw

again (11). They were the baby-farmers whose activities were the subject of public scandal during the period. Children had been placed in their homes by parents who either intended to abandon them all along, or who absconded when they found themselves unable to keep up the payments. Sixteen (50%) of the children in this group were illegitimate, and six (19%) had since been deserted by both parents, as compared with 20% and 5% in the sample as a whole.

The evidence produced at the trials of Mrs Dyer and Sarah Ellis and Margaret Waters (12), together with some of the cases which came to the notice of the NSPCC, give the impression that private foster parents were mercenary people, ready to connive at a parent's desire to be rid of an unwanted child by making little, if any, effort to ensure its survival. Some private foster parents of sample children were believed to have ill-treated or neglected them: Martha F. was 'in terror of the woman with whom she lived', while Charles T. had probably been ill-treated by his foster mother's son, who had taken him in after he became unmanageable (13). In all, three (10%) children who came into care from private foster parents had been ill-treated, and eight (25%) were considered to have been in moral danger. In the sample as a whole, the percentages were very similar, being 10% and 28% respectively. Some of the children were removed because they were living in a 'low locality' where they could not help but learn 'evil', or because an elderly foster parent could no longer control them, but this was rather a function of the foster parents' own circumstances than evidence of deliberate neglect. Similarly, those foster parents who precipitated a child's departure by

putting up their fees were more likely to have been acting through necessity than from a particularly mercenary motive (14). Cruelty and greed were not generally characteristics of the private foster parents of sample children.

Far from neglecting children whom they had often been manipulated into providing with a permanent home, many of the private foster parents had cared devotedly for their charges for several months after all payments had ceased. Changes in the foster parents' own circumstances such as death, ill-health or a reduced income, generally precipitated an admission. Charles D. had been abandoned in the care of his mother's ex-landlady; she looked after him for thirteen months without pay until her own straitened circumstances led her to apply to the Society for his admission (15). Alice C.'s foster parents had received no payment for her maintenance for the previous four years; she was not admitted to the Society until several months after her foster mother had been taken into the county asylum, and then returned to her previous home as soon as she recovered (16). Although they had no legal obligations towards them, the families of foster parents sometimes took over the care of these children when the designated foster mother became incapacitated. Ernest V. had been cared for by a foster family for six years without payment. When the original foster mother died, her daughter had taken over his custody. The district visitor did not consider that the care she provided was adequate, and referred Ernest to the Society. After his admission his foster family continued to write and send him presents, and at one stage had him to stay for a few days holiday. They also agreed to pay five shillings per

year towards his maintenance. In spite of their obvious commitment, the Society did not approve of Ernest's bond to people who, though not disreputable themselves, lived in an undesirable area, and had relatives who were openly 'living immoral lives'. Their offer of a home on his discharge was refused, and he was eventually moved well over a hundred miles away, presumably in order to escape their attentions (17). The extent of commitment displayed by private foster parents confirms Rowntree's impression that 'there is much...mutual helpfulness among the very poor', and suggests that even in conditions of extreme poverty, relationships could transcend considerations of self-interest (18). It also provides a striking contrast to the unreliability of the middle-class referrers and sponsors who rarely knew their proteges well enough to develop a strong attachment to them, and never actually looked after them.

Official Sources of Assistance

Given the enormous practical and financial problems faced by the sample families, it is not surprising to find that many, in addition to receiving considerable support from relatives and friends, had also come to the notice of other agencies before approaching the Society. One hundred and twenty-seven families (32%) were already known to another private charity or voluntary organisation before they applied to the Waifs and Strays: fourteen of these families were already known to the NSPCC and twelve had received assistance from the Charity Organisation Society. Support had not only come in the form of monetary aid or advice: 59 (16%) of the sample children and 72 (9%) of their siblings had already

been placed in some form of voluntary care.

Officials of the poor law were even better known to the sample families than were the agents of private charities. One hundred and seventy-nine (45%) of the 400 sample children came from families which had either been in receipt of outdoor relief, or had been admitted to workhouses and district schools as indoor paupers. This high percentage casts further doubt on the claim that the children in voluntary societies were from a superior class to those who were dealt with under the poor law.

Parents' Attitudes towards Admission

The New Poor Law of 1834 was deliberately designed to deter the indigent from seeking assistance, and it seems likely that many families who were obliged to apply for relief had only done so with extreme reluctance. Although bodies such as the Charity Organisation Society were convinced that there was a hard core of scroungers who survived by preying upon the benevolence of a range of ill-coordinated charities, the sample data suggest that few parents approached the voluntary rescue societies with any degree of eagerness. The fact that middle-class referrers often found it necessary to persuade parents to allow their children to enter the Waifs and Strays suggests that, in spite of their manifest difficulties, many had little desire to relinquish their responsibilities. Mary Ann C.'s father, who was said to be 'seldom at home and seldom sober' nevertheless refused to agree to her admission, unless she could be placed in a nearby home, 'as it is, his consent is very reluctant'. Harriet C.'s mother made similar stipulations, and again, only agreed to part 'with great

reluctance'. When an application was made on behalf of Lizzie G., the vicar wrote: 'I am exceedingly glad the Aunt has at last given way as for nearly two years I have been trying to persuade her to let her go away from the house and have proper care'. Admission may well have been seen as too final a solution to what might eventually prove to be a temporary crisis; parents' reluctance to take what must have appeared to be an irrevocable step that admitted defeat was openly acknowledged by referrers, who regarded their attitude as one of selfish disregard for their children's future: 'You know, no doubt,' wrote Mary Ann C's referrer, 'how suspicious parents get, and how very difficult it is at any time to induce them to allow their children to be placed in Homes' (19).

It seems likely that these suspicions may have stemmed from the perception that a placement with the Society would lead to a weakening of family ties. Most parents would have been aware, either through their own or their neighbours' experiences, of the damage that admission to the workhouse did to family cohesion. Many also had first or second-hand experience of the workings of the voluntary child-rescue societies. Barnardo's battles with the courts between 1889 and 1891 were extensively reported, and there is some evidence to suggest that his rather autocratic treatment of parents' rights had become public knowledge: thus Elizabeth G. was admitted to the Waifs and Strays after her mother had 'absolutely refused to let her go to Dr. Barnardo's Village Homes, lest she should be emigrated' (20).

All parents who applied for a child's admission to the Waifs and Strays were expected to agree to a long-term separation, but as we have already

seen, unlike those whose children entered Barnardo's or Dr Stephenson's Homes (the National Children's Home), from 1887 onwards, they were given the option to refuse consent to emigration. Their attitudes towards the loosening of family ties implicit in the contract, can be deduced from their answers to the two consent questions present on the general application forms. The first question asked:

Are the child's parents, guardians or next of kin, willing to sign an agreement to commit it wholly to the care of the managers of the Home, to obey the rules in force and to permit the said child when fully trained to be sent to any situation in the United Kingdom which may be obtained for it by the Committee ? (21)

Few parents can have been unaware that by agreeing to this clause, which allowed the Society to place their child at an unspecified distance from his original home until he had been successfully launched into adulthood, they were risking a permanent separation. Considerations such as this must have lain behind the reservations expressed by the two parents quoted above, who insisted on their children being placed near them. Yet stipulations such as these were rare: of the 346 parents or guardians who were asked this question, 229 (66%) gave their unequivocal consent, 20 (6%) expressed some reservations and 6 (2%) withheld their permission. (A further 84 (24%) ignored the question, but in many of these latter cases the application was completed by the matrons of homes in which children who had already undergone a long-term separation, were being transferred to the Society.) Many parents, who had finally come to the conclusion that separation was inevitable, must have felt that there was no chance of their child being accepted unless they gave their unreserved consent to the Society's requirements.

However, parents who agreed to a child being placed wherever the Society chose in the United Kingdom, tended, nevertheless to baulk at the prospect of emigration. When the same group of parents and guardians were asked: 'Is there any objection to [the child's] being emigrated if this is thought to be desirable by the Society?' (22), only 104 (30%) claimed there was none. Of the remainder, 35 (10%) gave permission but expressed reservations, 7 (2.0%) were undecided, and 3 (1%) were apparently not consulted. Eighty-nine (26%) applicants ignored the question. One hundred and nine (31%) parents or guardians objected to their children emigrating, and were considered to have withheld their consent.

Parents who objected to emigration were projected as selfishly preventing their children from profiting from an unprecedented opportunity to better themselves. They also made it difficult for the Society to implement a cheap and efficient means of disposing of children who would otherwise need to be maintained at some considerable expense for a number of years. In 1890, when resources were at a particularly low ebb, an ominous note appeared on the application form: 'Preference will be given to those cases in which consent to emigration is expressed'. If this was intended to encourage more parents to suppress their misgivings, it failed completely: in fact, when parents were given this warning, a larger percentage (34%) expressed objections than when they were not (28%).

The transportation of adult criminals did not end until 1864, and it is possible that some of the objections to emigration were engendered by the

obvious similarities between the two systems (23). However, the reluctance of many parents to agree to long-term separation, particularly when there were plans to place the child out of reach abroad, was based not upon stigma, but upon perceptions of the finality of the move. A later chapter will show that, where children remained in Britain, a surprisingly large number of families were eventually reunited, sometimes against considerable odds. Parr's work demonstrates that even where juvenile emigrants were encouraged to sever their links with the past, 22% succeeded in remaining in touch with their families (24). Nevertheless, at the time a child entered the Society's care, the prospect of maintaining a relationship over a period of years during which the constraints of both finance, distance and employment would make visiting difficult, must have seemed daunting. Most parents must have applied for admission with the expectation that the separation would be permanent.

It is important to ask why parents who were popularly considered to regard their children in solely economic terms, objected so frequently to their permanent removal. By placing their children within the Society they largely succeeded in avoiding responsibility for their future maintenance; in particular, the question of paying contributions did not arise once a child had emigrated. Why then, was this such an unpopular move?

It is obvious that nineteenth century working-class parents relied upon the earnings of their adolescent children to ease the pressures on the family budget. Several observers have noted that the wages of young

teenagers were regarded as the parents' right: a just recompense for the years of dependency. The repeated tales of previously unconcerned parents who waited at the doors of industrial schools, ready to reclaim sixteen-year-olds on their day of discharge, suggest that economic motivations may have been behind their eagerness to be reunited: their prevalence provides evidence of a calculative element in nineteenth century kin relationships, discussed above. As the rescue societies were well aware, children who had emigrated or moved to distant parts of the United Kingdom could not so easily be reclaimed by predatory relations. One could claim, as did many contemporary observers, that permanent separation became unpopular when parents realised they would lose the benefit of their children's earnings (25).

Such an argument is perhaps supported by the age-structure of the children who came into the Society's care, detailed in Table 7.3. Although the mean age at admission was 9.6 years, the largest numbers of children (42%) entered the Society between the ages of ten and thirteen. This was, of course, exactly the time at which the years of dependency were drawing to a close, and the child was beginning to be seen as an economic asset to the family. Their parents' reluctance to agree to permanent separation could be seen as an unwillingness to accept the financial loss that this would incur. This argument is supported by the fact that many of the fifteen and sixteen-year-olds who came into the Society's care had failed in their attempts to secure or hold down employment, and were seen to be 'in need of training' if they were ever to become financially independent.

However, parents who were motivated solely by economic considerations

TABLE 7.3

AGE AT ADMISSION
(Waifs and Strays sample: 398 cases)

<u>AGE</u>	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Under one year	6	1.5
1	7	1.8
2	7	1.8
3	6	1.5
4	17	4.3
5	15	3.8
6	27	6.8
7	26	6.5
8	36	9.0
9	28	7.0
10	40	10.1
11	50	12.6
12	34	8.5
13	42	10.6
14	24	6.0
15	12	3.0
16	13	3.3
17 and over	8	2.1
TOTAL: 398		100.0
Not Known: 2		

Mean age at admission: 9.6
Standard deviation: 3.8

might have been expected to use similar calculations in deciding which child in the family should apply for admission. Why were not most applications made in favour of very young children, whose parents would benefit from their absence during their long period of dependency? It was the Society's stated policy to board out children under seven : there was apparently a ready supply of potential foster parents, and thus the admission rate for younger children was not dependent upon the availability of residential accommodation. Yet only 28% of admissions came into this age-group, and only 11% were under five.

In economic terms, it made obvious sense to apply for the admission of the youngest child in a family, who , facing the longest period of dependency, might be expected to be its most expensive member. Parr claims that this was often the case, and that 'the records of the child emigration agencies are full of cases in which widows' youngest children were surrendered to the homes because adequate day-care became beyond the laundry worker's or charwoman's means' (26). However this contention is not supported by the data from the Waifs and Strays sample. Taking the group as a whole, only about a third (34%) of the children were the youngest members of their families; moreover, if one restricts the analysis to those families which had suffered no dispersion prior to admission, only 16% of youngest children were admitted. Widows whose families had suffered no previous dispersion were most likely to apply for the admission of children who had one or two younger siblings living at home (67%).

The parents' motivation cannot be adequately assessed on the basis of

the surviving information. We do not know, for instance, how much choice they were given in deciding which of their children should apply for admission. Nor do we know which applications were refused, and why (27). We do know that one of the Society's priorities was to rescue girls in moral danger ; not only were girls at their most vulnerable between the ages of ten and thirteen, but this is also the age at which they might have been considered most amenable to the Society's influence. Applications may have been made for children in this age group because the Waifs and Strays was seen to cater specifically for their needs : by 1894, 48% of the Society's residential places were for older girls.

On the other hand, the above data on the children's ages and position in the family could be interpreted in the light of attachment. The oldest child was of the most practical and economic use to the family, and might indeed have already left home by the time of the precipitating crisis. The youngest child was the most dependent upon the parent's presence, and probably the least able to cope in a strange environment. It made sense to allow middle children, who were already growing towards independence, to leave the family when the pressures became too great. The fact that parents did not, as a rule, send out their youngest and most expensive children when economic and practical circumstances demanded suggests that, even in the most destitute families, a genuine bond existed. Of course there were families where bonding was weak, and children were neglected and ill-treated: however there were many others where attachment was strong. It was this which explained the reluctance of many parents to admit defeat and apply for admission, and which lay behind the objections

to emigration. This was the factor most frequently ignored by middle-class referrers, who failed to comprehend that beneath the dirt and poverty, family attachments could still survive. By denying their existence, they created a distorted view of parents, which rendered many of their actions inexplicable. The strong supportive networks that many observers noted as a feature of working-class communities were also part of family life. For many parents, the weakening of these relationships was too great a price to pay for their children's future respectability: the evidence suggests that as they grew towards adolescence and adulthood, many separated children concurred with this opinion (28).

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE SOCIETY'S POINT OF VIEW

Although the Waifs and Strays 'handbooks for workers' laid down some guidelines, and further policy decisions were announced in the annual reports, the published information is not sufficiently comprehensive to produce a clear indication of the reasoning behind many of the Society's actions. Moreover, as will become apparent below, the information from the case-papers suggests that there were many occasions on which official policy was disregarded both by members of the executive and at local level.

There is, however, one thread which runs through the whole of the Society's operations, and to which most decisions can be traced: that is the need not only to be, but also to appear, financially responsible. There were two strands to this theme: in order to gain credibility and attract supporters, Rudolf had to demonstrate that his Society was established on a firm financial footing, and would not waste the money that had been entrusted to his care; the other strand is perhaps more interesting, for he also had to show that he was not allowing the donations he received to be used as a means of enabling disreputable parents to avoid their financial obligations towards their children. It may have been because the Society owed its existence to their charity that supporters often adopted a proprietorial attitude towards its work, and took pains to ensure that their generosity was not misplaced.

As a later chapter will show, most (though not all) of the voluntary

societies were able to give at least some of their children better material care than their parents could provide. Few contemporaries doubted their claim that the upbringing they offered was superior to that provided either by the poor law or by the children's own parents. It is only recently that researchers have begun to question the outcomes of the work of men such as Barnardo, Rudolf and Stephenson (1): at the time they were acclaimed, almost without reservation, as offering a beneficial solution to the problems of child poverty and neglect. Thus the effectiveness of the societies was rarely debated: the questions that were discussed repeatedly, and the responses on which each society was judged, were those involving, in the broadest sense, their financial policies. Therefore an examination of the accounts, far from being an esoteric exercise, provides a crucial means of laying bare the underlying philosophy behind a society's practices.

Finance

In 1888 the Waifs and Strays' receipted income amounted to £22,988.0.7d. Only 8% of this was derived from the maintenance contributions paid by relatives, boards of guardians and other legally responsible parties; 5% came from the children's earnings and proceeds from the various cottage industries that were run as training schemes (see chapter 11 below), and 1% came from miscellaneous sources such as the sale of the monthly paper, registration fees from affiliated homes, and interest from savings accounts. By far the major proportion of the income (85%) came from the charitable donations and fund-raising activities of the growing network of

independent, voluntary supporters. Although the Society's receipts nearly tripled during the sample period, the proportion contributed by each source remained relatively stable: by 1897, possibly as a result of the interest shown by boards of guardians, the percentage contributed by relatives and statutory bodies had risen slightly at the expense of that received from private individuals, but the latter were still providing 83% of the total income.

Thus the Society could not have survived without the financial support of the general public. The supporters came from the same upper middle-class social group who referred children to the Society, and indeed there was considerable overlap between the two, many referrers also being subscribers or fund-raisers. They not only donated money themselves, they also used their influence to persuade their friends and relatives, their children, their servants, and even their tradesmen to subscribe to their chosen charity (2).

A proliferation of children's rescue societies in the late nineteenth century had intensified the competition for a finite supply of funds. The strongest competition came from Barnardo. His organisation was run on deeply Christian, but non-denominational lines: Dr Barnardo's Homes thus attracted many Anglican supporters who might otherwise have subscribed to the Waifs and Strays. Indeed, by the 1880s, Barnardo had left the Plymouth Brethren to join the Church of England. In 1894 he recruited twelve Anglican clergymen to publicise his work - men who might otherwise have acted as local or diocesan secretaries for the Waifs and Strays. Although initially he upheld the popular prejudice against advertising as

being proof of a worldliness that was hardly consonant with Christianity, he soon discovered that publicity produced results. His blatant manipulation of the public sympathy to further his cause, through the use of heart-rending stories and photographs earned him much criticism. There were well-founded allegations that his famous 'before and after' photographs were sometimes faked, and that the statistics which moved the public to generosity had occasionally been doctored (3). Nevertheless, his methods were extremely effective. His receipts grew from £ 214 in 1868 to £110,478 in 1890. In this latter year his income was over three times that of the Waifs and Strays. As his organisation grew, Barnardo also overcame his initial repugnance for debt: at the time of his death in 1905, his organisation owed nearly £250,000 (4).

Barnardo's success can be attributed at least in part to his ability to overcome conventional scruples in order to further his ends. Rudolf lacked the colourful personality which had earned Barnardo a large personal following. Moreover, the Waifs and Strays supporters are likely to have come from a slightly superior social class, which was deeply suspicious of any organisation whose tactics could be described as ungentlemanly. Although he needed to overcome certain scruples in order to attract adequate funds, Rudolf could not openly use the flamboyant tactics of his rival. Furthermore, many of his supporters were well aware of the value of their interest, and felt it incumbent upon them to ensure that their money was well-spent by monitoring the Society's policies and its methods of management. One of Rudolf's most difficult tasks was to increase his income without alienating his existing body of support.

During the period under scrutiny the Waifs and Strays' accounts were carefully recorded and audited annually. While other voluntary societies were sometimes obliged to prove that funds had not been misappropriated (5), Rudolf's own integrity appears never to have been doubted. Nevertheless, throughout the sample period the Society's finances were somewhat precarious. The flow of cash was notoriously irregular: although the traditional goodwill of the Christmas period ensured that accounts would be in credit in the latter part of the financial year, between about March and November, when supporters tended to take holidays and visit friends, there was almost invariably an overdraft. Unless it could be seen to expand, the Society ran the risk of losing subscribers to a more obviously dynamic organisation. And yet, the greater its commitments, the greater the extent of the seasonal overdraft. Any rumour that the Society was being mismanaged financially was equally damaging to its fund-raising potential: in 1887, after the overdraft had exceeded £500, a 'merchant' wrote: 'I see you have a considerable deficit on the general fund, and therefore I can no longer help you' (6). In 1898 a Miss Lonsdale asked C.S.Loch of the Charity Organisation Society whether her sister should hand over a children's convalescent home to the Waifs and Strays. His reply, claiming that the overdraft was now over £4,000, dissuaded the committee from arranging the transfer (7).

It was easier to persuade supporters to provide funds for the maintenance of local children, or the opening of a home within their own dioceses than to finance a national movement with which they could not easily identify. Thus donations were often made towards a specific

project, and the large deficit arose partly because money which had been given for one purpose could not always be transferred to another. In 1897 a Mrs Mayer wrote to J.W.Horsley, claiming that, several years previously, she had donated £10 in memoriam, to be given to the support of a child named Jessie, and had never heard the result. Horsley asked Rudolf to trace the date of the donation and send Mrs Mayer 'the case-paper of any Jessie received about that time, to whose benefit the £10 may be considered to have been applied'. Jessie M's case-papers were sent off, but unfortunately this did not succeed in silencing Mrs Mayer who wrote back asking for her address. By then Jessie was twenty-two and had been discharged from the Society's care for over four years. After a hurried search during which she was discovered to have married, moved to Leeds and then been deserted by her husband, she was eventually traced to Wood Green where she was working in a confectionery near her sister. Perhaps she profited from the renewed acquaintance with 'her' benefactress (8).

During the sample years, the Society separated its income into two accounts: a special fund for establishing new projects, often at local or diocesan level, and a general fund for money which could be freely spent. While the special funds were usually in credit, the general fund, which was expected to support all additional expenses, including the maintenance of children placed with foster parents or in affiliated homes, was regularly overdrawn. In 1885, when the overdraft exceeded £800, the executive committee decided that drastic measures should be taken, and a resolution was passed authorising Rudolf to withdraw some of these

children and place them either in the Society's homes in Britain and Canada, or discharge them from its care (9). Many supporters would have given their assistance in the belief that they were enabling the children of the poor to be permanently separated from their degraded parents: the decision to return them was likely to be at least as damaging to the Society's reputation as the growing overdraft. In later years, although the deficit continued to grow, and reached £3,400 by the end of the sample period, restrictions were confined to a refusal to expand during periods of financial restraint: new cases were placed on a waiting list until the balance improved, and offers of land or property were sometimes refused if there were insufficient resources to develop them (10). However, in general, instead of sharply cutting expenditure, the Society attempted to increase its income with a series of special appeals. On several occasions a large donation of £1,000 or more saved the somewhat shaky situation. A resolution passed in 1885 allowed the Society to advertise in Church papers and in the daily press, but the Waifs and Strays publicity was far more muted than that of Barnardo. The only document which approached Barnardo's sensationalism was Horsley's pamphlet Am I My Sister's Keeper ? A succession of lurid tales of child prostitution, this was specifically intended to drum up support for rescue work; but it scarcely mentions the Society, and was published under the author's initials, without using his full name. It was, however, distributed by the executive to interested parties (11).

As Rudolf pointed out, in committing itself to the long-term care of large numbers of dependent children, the Society was obliged to anticipate

a level of future funding that would not always be forthcoming. Various schemes were introduced to encourage regular giving, but an overdraft was sometimes inevitable. Many of the supporters regarded any form of debt, including mortgages on property, as evidence of irresponsibility. In 1891, when the overdraft was approaching £1,000, John Salt, who was an ardent supporter as well as being a director of Lloyd's Bank, wrote:

while sympathising with the Case Committee in the regret they must feel in having to refuse new cases, I should certainly withhold any further assistance if they were to adopt any other course, in the face of the Finance Committee's recommendation, as a Society that spends money to any serious extent that it has not got, cannot be said to conduct its work on a business-like footing (12)

Although the Society needed to avoid the accusation of financial mismanagement, evidence that funds were desperately needed was not necessarily detrimental to its reputation. Once the overdraft reached a level at which new admissions had to be deferred, the growing waiting list could be publicised as proof of the extent and urgency of the demand. Information about children desperately awaiting admission was regularly published alongside appeals for more generous support. The impression that the Society was overwhelmed by urgent appeals to which it lacked the resources to respond is perhaps belied by the information that only 40% of sample children had to wait more than a month between application and admission. Moreover, although in the early years there was a long waiting list, by 1893 and 1894, it only averaged thirteen names: even in November 1894, when the deficit was reaching a new record level, there were only twenty-two children kept waiting for a place through lack of funds.

During the sample years an average of 29% of all applications were

turned down by the executive committee. No information has survived about these rejected cases, and we do not know how many of them were simply inappropriate. The percentage of rejections appears to have borne little relationship to the Society's ability to afford another admission: in 1894, when the deficit reached a record level of £3,573, as many as 81% of applications were accepted, while in 1888, the only sample year which ended with the account in credit, only 62% of applicants were given places. Nevertheless, in order to urge supporters to further efforts, information about the number of rejections was presented, along with details of the waiting lists, as demonstrating a shortfall in the Society's resources: thus when it became known that 200 children had been rejected in 1891, subscribers were told: 'this large number of failures to help cannot but be regarded as a reproach to the charity of the Church, a reproach which, God helping us, we must do our best to wipe off this year (13).

The Presentation of an Image

Not only did many supporters allow their allegiance to waver according to their perception of the Society's financial situation, they also kept a critical eye on policies. Chapter 3 has already described how, in the early days, influential members of the executive were able to steer the Society towards the rescue of young girls and towards juvenile emigration, by backing their arguments with hard cash. The views, or the perceived views, of individual supporters were equally influential. Without the security of a large government grant to rely on, the Society

was obliged to adopt policies which met with the approval of as many potential subscribers as possible: once supporters became antagonised, the cash supply would dry up and the whole organisation would founder.

Most individual supporters subscribed to the ideology of the poor law, and indeed a number of them would have also served on their local board of guardians, as did Rudolf himself (14). Although the Society criticised the child care practices of guardians who failed to separate their children from other inmates of the workhouse, or who herded them together in vast district schools, it did not overtly question the theory upon which the poor law was based. Members of the public tended to subscribe to a society such as the Waifs and Strays not because it was fundamentally opposed to poor law policy, but because, free from the considerations of less eligibility or the need to keep rates down, it could offer a better service to children than that provided by the public sector. This better service was popularly believed to be directed at children whose antecedents ensured that they came from a superior class than those for whom the poor law provided. The absence of any genuine distinction between children who were cared for in poor law or in voluntary institutions was noted by the Charity Organisation Society, and has been already discussed above (15).

The whole thrust of the poor law was to uphold parents' legal obligations to maintain their children by demanding that able-bodied fathers - and mothers to a certain extent - maintain their families without assistance from the state. Any form of support was considered to weaken family ties and encourage dependency, but the most damaging type of

help that could be offered to parents was financial assistance. Voluntary organisations, led by the Charity Organisation Society, were dissuaded from irresponsible almsgiving for similar reasons. Against a background of widescale destitution, the question of who should maintain the children of the poor was crucial to contemporary child care theory, and further explains why the financial records of the Society are such useful indicators of policy.

For the guardians of the poor, the answer was simple: if a relative was physically capable of maintaining a child for whom he was responsible then there was no need for assistance. In some of the sample cases, poor law guardians had been quite prepared to return children to abusive relatives who were legally liable to maintain them (16). However, for the voluntary societies there was an additional consideration: most had been founded in order to rescue children at risk. Yet this aim produced an obvious conflict between the perceived need to remove children from abusive parents, and the danger of releasing the same parents from their financial obligations: should the societies, for instance, refuse to rescue children whose parents had no intention of contributing towards their support? This was the fundamental dilemma with which Rudolf had to deal, and the issue was regularly debated in the monthly magazine. Eventually the Society resolved that it was more important to protect children from ill-treatment than to enforce parental obligations, but the decision was a contentious one (17). One of the major critics was C.S.Loch, of the Charity Organisation Society, who, in his report on the Waifs and Strays, declared that:

no child should be adopted in consequence of the misconduct or neglect of a parent without some effort to bring legal or other pressures upon such parent and in the reception of such cases by charitable institutions there seems some danger lest this should be overlooked (18)

The Charity Organisation Society was immensely influential amongst the type of people who were potential supporters of the Waifs and Strays, and such a report can only have damaged the latter's reputation and income. Throughout the period under study Rudolf was obliged to conform at least outwardly to the views of this organisation which, in its attempt to stamp out irresponsible almsgiving, seemed constantly to be looking for an opportunity to discourage his supporters (19). It may have been in order to reassure themselves that their own actions had not been irresponsible that those who gave to charity were so anxious to ensure that the money was spent wisely.

The Waifs and Strays were not alone in their failure to enforce the financial responsibilities of disreputable parents, and it is possible that the draconian severance policies adopted by societies such as Barnardo's were introduced to compensate for this weakness. Many of the Waifs and Strays supporters held far less liberal views about the rights of the children and their parents than Rudolf appears to have adopted. Policies were often a compromise between the sometimes harsh views of those who financed the work, and Rudolf's own fairmindedness. Under the circumstances it is not surprising that the experiences of individual children did not always match up with published policies, as the following paragraphs will show.

Charitable almsgiving was often considered to be as damaging to families as outdoor relief. Moreover, the poor law deterred families from appealing for assistance by separating those who entered the workhouse. Politically, it was thus extremely difficult for a voluntary society to offer financial assistance to enable parents to keep a family together, even if the mother was a respectable widow. The sample contains several cases in which a middle-class sponsor maintained a child in one of the Society's homes at a cost which, had it been made over to the parent, would have prevented a separation. Parents and relatives who pointed this out, were regarded as grasping and ungrateful: thus the local secretary from Derby explained that she was withdrawing an application because: 'the aunts of the little crippled boy, after giving us a great deal of trouble, are too proud to send the poor child to the Home. They would accept the £15 a year and not be ashamed of that! So that case has fallen through altogether' (20).

The sample contains only two cases in which the Society defied public opinion and made an allowance to prevent children from being separated from their relatives. When Charles W.'s mother died, his maternal relations rescued him and his two brothers from their abusive father who was alleged to have 'stripped them of their clothes for drink'. Six years later the grandfather died, leaving the boys in the care of an aunt and an uncle whose health was deteriorating. The clergyman who referred the case argued that the aunt was:

a most respectable and highly principled woman, and in all respects thoroughly suitable to have charge of her nephews. I should regard it as most undesirable that the boy, Charles W. should be removed from her charge, and I venture to appeal

to the Society for a grant towards his maintenance so that he may be considered boarded out with his aunt (21).

The grandfather's death had seriously reduced the family's resources, and now, even when the uncle was able to work, the total income for two adults and three boys approaching adolescence was only 16s 4d. Although pitifully inadequate, this sum was no less than that received by many other working-class families (see above, table 6.2). Although the grandfather had been under a legal obligation to maintain his grandchildren, this did not extend to their uncle and aunt. It may have been for this reason that the Society agreed to make a boarding-out allowance to Charles' aunt; in an attempt to counter criticism the executive insisted that the arrangement should be identical to other fostering placements, and could only be made if the aunt formally agreed to become a foster mother, and could conform to the regulations (22).

George F. was the only child in the sample whose mother was paid an allowance to keep him at home. When her husband died, Mrs F. was left with four children all under the age of seven. She was 'an industrious, cleanly and thoroughly deserving woman' who had had the foresight to save a little money upon which she was living while she tried to establish herself as a dressmaker. The referrer explained that Mrs F. was an excellent mother, who was very anxious to keep all her children together, at least until they were a little older. She asked if Mrs F. could be made a foster parent to her youngest child, which would enable her to receive the Society's boarding-out allowance of four shillings a week. Possibly because the referee was 'a good friend of the Society', this request was granted, but as in the case of Charles W. above, only on condition that

Mrs F. complied with the Waifs and Strays' regulations for foster parents by joining the Church of England and signing the official boarding-out agreement. Widows had a legal obligation to maintain their children, and they were generally regarded as able-bodied adults who ought to be able to carry out their responsibilities without assistance. This arrangement would thus have been considered extremely contentious by many supporters, and it is not surprising to find that eighteen months later, when George died, his mother was refused any further assistance unless she agreed to reciprocate by accepting an unrelated foster child on behalf of the Society (23).

Less potentially damaging would have been the handful of cases in which an eminently respectable widow was offered a job in one of the Society's homes in order to allow her to remain with her children. Harriet and Alfred B.'s mother was already a matron at Rose Cottage when it was taken over by the Waifs and Strays. Harriet remained with her for a further three years, until she was fourteen, when she left the cottage for an unspecified reason, perhaps to go out to service. Alfred was allowed to stay with his mother until he was ten, when he was sent to school in the nearby village of Redenhall. Rose Cottage was a certified home for girls aged from eight to fourteen, and presumably Alfred had to leave when he was considered too old to remain in an exclusively feminine community (24). Both these children were officially accepted by the Society as free cases, though it seems likely that their maintenance was deducted from their mother's salary. Similar arrangements with other children do not appear to have been so successful: three years after Annie B. had been

admitted to St. Hilda's home, her mother rejoined her as under-matron. However, six months later she left by mutual agreement, and was asked to take Annie with her, the matron having found her to be unreliable as far as maintenance payments were concerned (25).

Few relatives were eligible to be employed in the Society's homes. Although one sponsor did offer to employ a child's aunt as housekeeper in his country house, where her nephew might accompany her (26), in general, separation was the only means of assistance that would have been considered acceptable to the Society's supporters. For many of them, the major purpose of the Waifs and Strays was to civilise the children of the poor. This aim was reinforced by several articles in the monthly newspaper which argued that the falling crime figures were directly related to the work of the rescue societies. Horsley claimed that Clerkenwell prison, where he had been previously employed, had closed because the increased concern for children had significantly reduced the criminal population (27). For several years the Annual Report contained the following paragraph:

The Prison Commissioners, in their Report for 1881, say that "means for the effective repression of crime are to be sought much more among the agencies for securing a good training of the neglected part of our population in their early years than in any single form of punishment that can be devised" (28).

Children of the very poor could only become respectable if they were removed from their old associates and underwent training in one of the Society's homes. Admission was regularly considered to be infinitely more beneficial than the attentions of relatives, however well-meaning. An article in the monthly magazine described how a widowed father refused to

allow his daughter to undergo a year's training in a home so that she could learn to be a better housekeeper to him , and stop truanting from school:

'My sister-in-law in Yorkshire',he added,'hopes to take her some day'. 'And yet', I said,'you tell me you will not part from her? 'Oh! but that's a different thing', he replied,'that would be for her good'. So the poor child is to be given up to an unprincipled aunt rather than to the care of Christian friends in a Home where she would be prepared for a useful and happy life (29).

There appear to have been no grounds for the criticism of the aunt.

Restrictions on Admission

The great danger was that, by removing children from home, the Society laid itself open to further accusations that it encouraged irresponsibility, for parents who no longer had the physical custody of their children could easily evade their legal obligations to pay for their keep.

In order to allay popular fears that feckless parents would be allowed to escape these responsibilities, a list of 'rules for the guidance of the Executive when considering applications' was drawn up and published in the Annual Report for 1883. Children could not be considered for admission unless they fell within a range of eligible categories. These were as follows:

(a) Any child who shall have lost both parents, and who shall have no relatives or friends able to maintain it; (b) any child whose parent, or surviving parent, shall be physically incapable of supporting the child; (c) any child whose mother shall be a widow having other young children, and who shall be doing her best to support them on insufficient means;...(d) any illegitimate child whose mother shall be striving to retrieve her character, upon the understanding

that a contribution be made by the parents towards its maintenance, if possible; (e) any child seriously neglected or ill-treated by its parents or guardians, or subject to immoral influences; (f) any child whose parents, or surviving parent shall be undergoing a term of imprisonment, provided it has no other means of support.

This paragraph concluded with the following admonition:

The utmost care to be used in order to avoid encouraging natural guardians in idleness, or evil courses, and every legal step to be taken to compel parents to discharge their responsibilities (30).

It seems likely that this latter clause was included in order to allay reservations similar to those expressed by the Charity Organisation Society. That a major purpose of these rules was to emphasise the Society's responsible attitude towards parents' obligations to maintain their children is demonstrated by an article in the Leeds Mercury of 1885, which quotes this list in full, but exaggerates throughout the need for continued financial support from relatives. Thus category (a), for instance, is altered to 'orphans who have been respectably brought up and whose relatives are willing to aid in their maintenance'(31).

The list was accompanied by a series of further regulations, also designed to emphasise the responsible nature of the Society. Thus Rule II made it clear that only cases of genuine need would be considered, by laying it down that: 'no child be received whose relatives or friends are able to pay the full cost of its maintenance'(32).

The case-papers do not formally place the children in the categories designated by the executive, but the information which accompanied each child at admission was sufficient for me to attempt a classification in almost every case. Table 8.1 shows how all the sample children might have

been classified according to the rules laid down by the executive; table 8.2 restricts the classification to those whose fathers were living in the family home at the time of admission.

Firstly, it is clear that the rules were not adhered to rigorously: only about three quarters of the sample children were officially eligible for admission. Of those who did not fit the designated categories, only the 27 children who were admitted for training might have been received without arousing criticism. All but one of these were girls who had been unable to find or retain respectable employment; refusal to offer them assistance might well have rendered them at risk of falling into prostitution: thus they might conceivably have been considered as being 'subject to immoral influences' at least in the future, and this would have justified their admission.

Children who had been deserted, or whose parents were separated were not officially eligible. Indeed, the admission that these made up about 10% of the intake might have rendered the Society open to the accusation that it encouraged irresponsibility by offering the assurance that children would escape the consequences of their parents' fecklessness.

Secondly, the rules suggest that the intake should be largely restricted to orphans and the children of lone mothers. Many of the Society's supporters would have subscribed to the popular view, embodied in the poor law, that able-bodied men should be encouraged to remain independent, and not be offered the chance of evading their responsibilities towards their dependants. Thus only fathers who were physically unfit could legitimately be offered assistance.

TABLE 8.1

CATEGORY AT ADMISSION:ALL CHILDREN
(Waifs and Strays sample data 1887-1894: 393 cases)

<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Orphan	73	18.6
Parent(s) physically unfit	13	3.3
Mother:widow with other young children	52	13.2
Illegitimate with striving mother	16	4.1
Neglected/illtreated/immoral influences	106	27.0
Parent in prison	0	00.0
Committed	32	8.1
<u>OTHER (DO NOT FIT CATEGORY)</u>		
Admitted for training	27	6.9
Deserted	33	8.4
Parents separated, mother striving	8	2.0
Father: widower with other young children	8	2.0
Other	25	6.4
TOTAL:		393
Not known:		7
		100.00

TABLE 8.2

CATEGORY AT ADMISSION:CHILDREN WITH CO-RESIDENT FATHERS
(Waifs and Strays sample data 1887-1894:90 cases)

<u>CATEGORY:</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Orphan	N/A	
Parent(s) physically unfit	8	9.1
Mother:widow with other young children	N/A	
Illegitimate with striving mother	N/A	
Neglected/illtreated/immoral influences	49	55.7
Parent in prison	0	0.0
Committed	9	10.2
<u>OTHER (DO NOT FIT CATEGORY)</u>		
Admitted for training	10	11.4
Deserted	N/A	
Parents separated, mother striving	N/A	
Father: widower with other young children	8	9.1
Other	4	4.5
TOTAL		88
Not known		2
		100.0

However, at least 90 (24 %) fathers of sample children were actively involved in the family at the time of admission. Table 8.2 demonstrates the categories under which their children were admitted to the Society. Only eight (9%) of these children had fathers who were physically unfit. Another eight were the children of respectable widowers who should not, in theory, have required assistance; the admission of even such a small number could have alienated potential supporters. The vast majority of children with co-resident fathers were rescue cases: 49 (56%) were admitted on the grounds of ill-treatment, neglect or because they were subject to immoral influences, a further nineteen (22%) children were either committed through the courts on similar grounds or else admitted for training as a preventive measure. This is a point to which I shall later return.

The Society did occasionally attempt to avoid the accusation that it encouraged irresponsibility by refusing children whose circumstances did not fit the prescribed categories. Thus Thomas C., whose widowed father was unable to find a housekeeper to look after him, was rejected on the grounds that 'if he were taken he would have to be placed with some respectable person who would undertake to look after him properly. This the committee thinks the father ought to be able to do without asking for assistance from a charitable society' (33).

Thomas C. was unlucky, for the Society did sometimes accept the children of respectable widowers, though this activity was rarely publicised. As the tables show, eight such children were present in the sample, and appear to have been admitted for no other reasons than those which

led Thomas C.'s father to apply. The admission of even such a small number could have been regarded as politically contentious, and there is some suggestion that in such instances, where the merits of the case were questionable, the Society tried to defend itself from adverse criticism by insisting that parents should contribute substantially towards their children's maintenance. Five of the widowers paid at least half the cost of their children's keep: although the figures are too small to be really comparable, this is a considerably higher percentage of supporting parents than was to be found in the sample as a whole, where only 14% paid a similar sum .

Though the admission of widowers' children was a contentious issue, it was not nearly as controversial as the assistance offered to unmarried mothers. It was considered acceptable for societies such as Dr.Muller's Homes and the London Orphan Asylum to refuse illegitimate children on the grounds that acceptance would allow profligate parents to escape the consequences of their actions and thereby encourage immorality (34). Any society which chose to adopt a different course of action inevitably laid itself open to criticism. Judged by the standards of the time, the Waifs and Strays policy towards unmarried mothers was extremely lenient: the Society placed almost half (44%) of the 'respectable' illegitimate children within ten miles of their 'striving' mothers, so that regular visiting was at least a possibility. Although, as has previously been noted, employers often guaranteed the mother's payment, they were not , as a general rule, expected to exert the rigid surveillance that formed part of a similar boarding-out scheme introduced by Barnardo (35). In order

to deflect the adverse publicity which such leniency must have engendered, the executive made it a rule that these mothers should pay a flat rate of four shillings per week maintenance (36). All the sixteen respectable unmarried mothers in the sample were required to contribute to their childrens' keep: fourteen of them paid the requisite four shillings or more. Table 8.3 shows the maintenance contributions made by all sample parents: only seven per cent of them supported their children to this extent, and over half of these were unmarried mothers.

It may have been in order to demonstrate its firm stance against immorality that the Society charged unmarried mothers a flat rate rather than a percentage of their pay. As an earlier chapter has demonstrated, women's earnings were much lower than those of men. Table 8.4 illustrates the percentage of wages that parents were obliged to pay towards the support of children who were being cared for by third parties. While most of this money was paid to the Waifs and Strays, sums paid in support of those siblings of sample children being cared for by other organisations have been included in these calculations. Of the fourteen parents who were required to contribute over fifty per cent of their pay towards the upkeep of their children, only one was a father. The remainder were all lone mothers, some of whom paid out eighty or ninety per cent of their cash wages. Only about half of these women were unmarried mothers: widows and separated wives could also occasionally be required to pay high sums, again presumably to encourage the sanctity of marriage or to discourage dependency. Thus Mrs T., a widow with only one child, who would therefore have been expected to manage without assistance

TABLE 8.3

PAYMENTS BY PARENTS AND OTHER RELATIVES
(Waifs and Strays sample data 1887-1894, 355 cases)

<u>PAYMENT PER WEEK</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Under one shilling	278	78.3
1/- to 1/11	23	6.5
2/- to 2/11	14	3.95
3/- to 3/11	14	3.95
4/- and over	26	7.3
TOTAL		355
Not known		45
		100.0

TABLE 8.4

PAYMENTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF PARENTS' WAGES
(Waifs and Strays sample data 1887-1894, 80 cases)

<u>PERCENTAGE OF WEEKLY WAGE PAID</u> <u>TO MAINTAIN CHILDREN</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>	<u>DEFAULTERS</u> <u>(%AGE)</u>
1-25	26	50.0	38%
26-50	12	23.1	41%
51-75	8	15.4	50%
76-100	6	11.5	83%
TOTAL		52	100.0
Not known		28	

from the poor law, was initially asked to pay four shillings per week, a sum that was eventually lowered by sixpence when it was found to represent her total income (37).

Parents who were paying such high proportions of already inadequate wages towards the support of their children were left with little or no margin to cater for their own needs, and tended to default. Of the eighty sample parents who were required to contribute, only 24 (40%) are known to have kept up the payments throughout their child's sojourn with the Society. At least 34 (43%) stopped contributing at some stage: about two thirds of these were lone mothers. The Society does not appear to have threatened defaulting parents with court action, and indeed there is considerable doubt whether the loose maintenance agreements made for voluntary cases would have been legally binding; instead, defaulters were pursued with persistent demands for payment, culminating in a visit from the Society's officer. Parents in domestic service could hardly have hidden such harassment from the rest of the household; most employers could be trusted to side with the Society and insist that obligations should be met.

A common response to defaulting parents, who, after all, were generally being charged high maintenance payments because their eligibility was in some doubt, was to threaten to discharge the child. Eight children were peremptorily sent home because their parents had failed to keep up the payments: in these cases it was apparently considered wiser to risk the child's future well-being rather than the Society's credibility as an organisation which upheld the demands of parental responsibility. Three

other parents were threatened with such action.

As Table 8.4 demonstrates, the proportion of parents who defaulted rose in direct relationship to the percentage of wages they were asked to hand over. While just over a third (38%) of parents who were paying up to 25% of their wages stopped contributing, all but one of those who were paying over 75% gave up, and this one exception is caused by insufficient evidence rather than proof of the mother's persistence. The Society appears not to have noted this anomaly, but even if it had been recognised, reductions would not necessarily have been made. It was the Waifs and Strays' policy to demonstrate its strength of purpose by requiring parents to pay a proportion of their children's expenses, and their wages did not necessarily come into the calculations.

In spite of popular suspicions to the contrary, most parents appear to have made considerable efforts to fulfil their financial obligations. Only three of the eighty potential contributors evaded all payment. The majority paid regularly until some financial crisis put them into arrears. Mothers in service, who were paying a major proportion of their cash wages to the Society, were unable to continue contributions when they became ill or redundant. Although the Society was prepared to negotiate a reduced payment, parents were generally left in no doubt but that their obligations would be upheld. The proposed return of a child whose original departure had been occasioned by grim necessity inevitably caused considerable anguish. The case-papers contain many letters such as the following, from Charles T.'s mother who had been paying 86% of her wages to the Waifs and Strays:

I am very sorry that I cannot send the money for Charles T.'s maintenance just now as I have been out of a situation and have had to pay for my lodging and food. But I am got into a comfortable situation again and will endeavour to send you part of the money on the first of August and the remainder (sic) when I send the next quarter money. Sir I am so sorry to keep you waiting. But I will be sure and send without fail (38).

Charles, it will be remembered, had been a marginal case who had only been accepted on the understanding that his mother paid four shillings a week towards his maintenance. She was in residential service, and had he been returned to her care she would almost inevitably have lost her livelihood. When, a few years later, her payments again fell into arrears, she absconded.

Mrs T. was not alone. At least eight (23%) parents who fell into arrears disappeared rather than face the Society's (and their employers') insistence on payment, or risk the poverty that would accompany the child's return. All but one were lone mothers.

However, not all parents who failed to keep up the maintenance payments risked the return of their children. When James W.'s mother failed to contribute, the local secretary advised Rudolf that in his opinion, 'it would be the very worst plan to return him to his mother who is a thoroughly abandoned woman' (39), and arranged for the Cheshire fund to take over financial responsibility. This 'thoroughly abandoned woman' had, incidentally, managed to pay 90% of her earnings towards her children's keep for nine months before she began to default.

Parental Responsibilities and Rescued Children

James W.'s case demonstrates a major paradox in the Society's financial strategy. Although respectable parents were required to support their children, and were often penalised when they defaulted, the more disreputable their circumstances, the less were they likely to be asked to pay.

Thirty-two sample children (8%) had been considered to be at such risk as to require committal through the courts to the Society's care. The vast majority of these (27:84%), were made the subject of industrial schools orders under the relevant legislation. Only three children were placed in the care of the Society after their parents had lost guardianship through fit person orders made under the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act (40).

The Society received a Treasury grant of between three shillings and three and sixpence per week for all children committed to industrial schools, but nothing from official sources for those placed in its care through the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act. Although the parents of all committed children could be required by law to pay for their maintenance, it was not always easy to ensure that an order would either be made or enforced. The Society is known to have received financial assistance from only two of the relatives of committed children: one father, whose second wife's cruelty had forced the NSPCC to take over guardianship of his children, paid the full cost of their keep; another was ordered to pay one shilling a week towards the cost of maintaining his daughter in an industrial school, in order, apparently, to force him

to undertake some responsibility for a child whom he had previously neglected (41).

Moreover, even where there was considerable evidence of neglect or abuse, it was not always easy to engineer a legal separation. As the NSPCC discovered, many magistrates were ideologically opposed to the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act on the grounds that it interfered with parental rights. Others found that courts were reluctant to make industrial school orders in areas where adverse home circumstances were the norm. Rather than go through the courts, it was often simpler to accept neglected or ill-treated children as voluntary cases whose parents could not be compelled to pay (42).

Abusive parents were often reluctant to part with their children, and would have refused to pay the Waifs and Strays for care which was only grudgingly accepted. Many could only be persuaded to agree to separation in exchange for a free place: thus the Society often had to choose between accepting the child free of charge, and thereby letting the parent evade his obligations, or allowing the child to remain in an environment that might well lead to crime or prostitution. Thus maintenance payments were rarely required of parents and relatives who had neglected or ill-treated their children, even if they were able to pay the full cost. Although only about a third of the sample children could have been described as rescue cases, they made up 81% of the group whose parents were not required to contribute to their maintenance.

Inevitably this practice led to objections from supporters, and particularly in the early years, the monthly paper contained many articles

debating the morality of removing children from 'evil' parents who did not deserve assistance (43). Nevertheless, where there was any risk of ill-treatment the interests of the child were generally taken to outweigh those of the Society, and most abusive parents were released from their financial responsibilities. Annie O.'s mother, who as the 'striving' parent of an illegitimate child would normally have been required to pay four shillings a week for her daughter's keep, was released from her responsibilities on the grounds that she herself was being reclaimed from prostitution (44).

There were, in fact, strong practical reasons for waiving payments from parents who were considered to be abusive. The 1891 Custody of Children Act made it possible to insist that those who demanded the return of their children be required to reimburse the amount so far spent upon their maintenance (45): under this clause, disreputable parents who had paid nothing towards their children's keep, could find that premature removal incurred prohibitive financial penalties. Moreover, as the next chapter will show, parents who failed to maintain their children were eventually considered to have lost the right to their custody.

Twice as high a percentage of children were considered to be at risk of abuse when the father was an active member of the family (56%) as in the sample as a whole (27%). Moreover the discrepancy is even greater when one-parent families are considered separately: only 22% of the children of lone mothers were considered to be at risk of abuse, while as many as 60% of the children of lone fathers came into this category; 76% of the 'at risk' children of lone fathers were girls who were suspected of being in

'moral danger'.

There must have been many instances where an adolescent daughter, left to keep house for a widowed father who drank, found herself occupying her mother's sexual role as well as her household duties. We do not, of course, have evidence to indicate how common this was. It is, however, also true that the Society was loath to accept the children of able-bodied widowers without additional grounds for admission. Moreover, unless these could be produced, fathers would be required to pay prohibitive sums. It is hard to avoid the suspicion that zealous referrers, anxious to secure agreement from both the parent and the Society to admit a doubtful case, sometimes exaggerated the need for rescue. Moreover, the Society may well have connived at such exaggerations, for they could be used to justify its practice of accepting a large number of children whose fathers were able-bodied. Such a hypothesis would explain the lack of corroborative evidence of abuse, such as the pregnancy of the child concerned or an older sister. It would also explain the unexpected finding that lone fathers were even more likely to abuse their daughters than were stepfathers.

Thus Charlotte and Matilda B. were only two of many girls for whom application was made on the ground that they were living with a widowed father. Though fond of his children, he was allegedly 'addicted to drink'. This was the only (uncorroborated) evidence of abuse except that 'we have already a terrible case of vice in the parish in similar circumstances'. Charlotte, who was seven at the time, was accepted, while Matilda was initially rejected, but then admitted to the Society a few years

later. Their father had been left with four small children aged between four and nine years old to support on an income of fifteen shillings a week. The truth of the allegation was immaterial: by claiming that there was a risk of sexual abuse, the referrer provided the Society with an excuse to admit the children without question, and ensured that their father would not be asked to pay for their maintenance (46).

CHAPTER NINE: CUSTODY AND THE OBLIGATION TO MAINTAIN

Throughout the sample period the Waifs and Strays executive calculated that the average cost of maintenance was 5s 9d per week for each child in residential care, and 5s per week for others. Only five parents or relatives paid the full cost of their children's maintenance throughout their period of care, and indeed it was a rule that, unless the child was ill-treated, applications from relatives who had sufficient resources to pay out such sums would not be admissable (1). As has been previously indicated, the vast majority of children (275:69%) received no financial support from their relatives. Nevertheless, only a minority of children who entered the Society's care were accepted unconditionally, as free cases for whom no arrangements for maintenance had been made.

In the main, children in the Society's care were supported not by their relatives, but by statutory organisations such as the Treasury or the poor law authority, voluntary organisations such as the Ladies Associations for the Care of Friendless Girls, and private individuals, many of whom were the parish ladies who had been so closely connected with referrals. In fact, 86 (38%) children in the sample received at least part of their financial support from the person or organisation which had referred them.

Payments from the guardians of the poor or the Treasury tended to be low: the Treasury paid 3s 6d per week for committed children over the age of ten, while most boards of guardians contributed similar sums for poor law children admitted to certified homes. These sums, however, were often

supplemented from other sources (2). Children supported by the poor law were also often expected to reach independence earlier than the Society would have recommended: thus guardians' payments for children in certified homes tended to peter out when their charges reached thirteen, forcing the Society to send them out to service before they were capable of holding down a job (see below, Chapter 11). Their support was also subject to various legal restrictions: thus when Selina K. had to be transferred to the Brighton Home on account of her health, the Bridgnorth guardians were unable to allow her sister to accompany her, as the latter home was not certified for the receipt of poor law children (3). Referrers sometimes refused to ask boards of guardians to support children whom they feared would be indiscriminately returned to disreputable relatives in order to save the rates: thus the Peckham guardians were not approached for the support of Alice H. in case they declared her abusive stepfather a liable relative, and he decided to reclaim her rather than contribute towards her keep (4). That such fears were not unfounded is illustrated by the case of Eleanor P., who appears to have been transferred from Epsom workhouse to the Society's home in Dulwich, but was abruptly removed when the magistrates ordered her father to maintain her (5).

On the other hand, however, much of the support provided by boards of guardians illustrates their considerable ingenuity in bending regulations to suit the perceived needs of the children concerned. Both the Chorlton and the Epsom Boards of Guardians had worked out schemes whereby they could maintain children in the Society's uncertified homes by classifying them as outdoor paupers, and diverting the money they should have paid the

parents, to the Waifs and Strays (6). Although the Society only received 3s 6d a week or less for the majority of its poor law children, a small number were supported by boards of guardians at the full rate. One wonders what arguments were used to justify such a comparatively large expenditure to the ratepayers.

One of the major criticisms levelled by the Charity Organisation Society at the financial basis of the Waifs and Strays was that the Society was too reliant on the uncertain proceeds of bazaars and 'drawing room meetings', and had too few regular sources of income. Successful sales of work tended to tempt charities to overestimate their future capacity for attracting funds, so that additional liabilities were incurred which the takings from subsequent sales were unable to meet. By 1899, C.S.Loch was advising Rudolf that it was 'dangerous to rely on anything except the regular support of convinced friends and careful administration' (7). At least ten years before this criticism was made, the executive were well aware of the insecurity of their financial position, and had taken steps to secure a steadier income. As Table 9.1 demonstrates, by the late 1880s, the vast majority of children (243:63%) were only accepted after some specific arrangement had been made for their support. A further thirty-two (8%) children in the sample were committed through the courts to industrial schools, and thus at least part-funded by the Treasury. Twenty-six others were only admitted on the understanding that they would shortly be emigrated, and thus cease to be the financial responsibility of the Society at a relatively early date. Emigration appears to have been recognised as an acceptable means of reducing

TABLE 9.1

CONDITIONS OF ACCEPTANCE
(Waifs and Strays sample data 1887-1894: 386 cases)

<u>CONDITION</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Unconditionally accepted	69	17.9
Accepted if or because financial support could be offered	241	62.4
Accepted on condition that emigration was agreed	26	6.7
Other	18	4.7
Committed	32	8.3
TOTAL		386
Not known		14
		100.00

expenses, and this is a point to which I shall later return. Only 69 (18%) children appear to have been admitted on a long-term basis as free cases, with their expenses underwritten by the general fund.

The great advantage of receiving children who were maintained by statutory bodies was that payments were reliable. Even if they did not fully cover the cost of the child's keep throughout the period of care, the guarantee that money would be regularly sent lent a degree of stability to the Society's finances, and must have acted as an incentive to expand the provision for poor law and committed children. Voluntary organisations such as Associations for the Care of Friendless Girls needed to maintain a steady relationship with the Society, and also tended to make regular payments: the Winchester branch of this organisation permanently maintained one of the beds in Connaught House, and the Bournemouth branch another (8).

Sponsorship

In an attempt to ensure similar stability of payment for children who did not receive support from statutory or voluntary organisations, the Waifs and Strays had introduced a scheme whereby private individuals, either singly or in groups, could sponsor a particular child. This arrangement was very similar to the schemes currently run by charities such as Action Aid, and Save the Children Fund, through which it is nowadays possible to maintain a child living in an undeveloped country.

To a certain extent this scheme fulfilled its major purpose, to secure a more regular income for the Society. However, it was beset with all the

problems detailed above, incurred by the nature of the relationship between the gentry and the poor. The majority of sponsors were 'parish ladies' whose interest in the Society was sporadic, and rarely sustained throughout the long period of a child's dependency. An agreement to sponsor a child was not legally binding, and many of those who had eagerly entered into such an arrangement in order to secure an admission, attempted to relinquish the responsibility when their initial enthusiasm began to wane. When William R's father died in Egypt in 1889, his mother was left destitute, and with five children under the age of thirteen to support. She was a British subject, and the Anglican community used their influential connections to arrange for the most delicate child to be cared for by voluntary organisations in England. The Duke of Westminster promised to nominate William for the Gordon Boys Home in Chobham when he was thirteen, and for the two intervening years, admission was sought to the Waifs and Strays. The Anglican clergyman and Rear Admiral Blomfield, whose wife had referred the case, agreed to pay jointly for his support 'if it is impossible otherwise to get the poor boy in'. Two years later, after William had been transferred to the Gordon Home, it was discovered that the Reverend Davis had defaulted on his side of the agreement and Admiral Blomfield was presented with a bill for £8-4s. Whereas earlier Mrs Blomfield had begged her influential relations to insist on the child's admission, she now asked them to persuade Rudolf that it was unfair to expect her husband to pay the full cost of his maintenance. In this she was unsuccessful (9).

Several of the sponsors died before 'their' children became independent,

and their relatives were not always willing to continue with the responsibility. Emma H. was 'adopted' by Miss M. Parry Ockenden, as a companion to another of her proteges. A group of her friends paid annual subscriptions to the sponsor, who placed Emma with a foster mother near Salisbury and undertook her supervision, although she herself lived in Pimlico. Eighteen months later payments were no longer forthcoming, and Emma had to be placed on the free list and supported by the overburdened general fund. Possibly Miss Ockenden had died, for her sister wrote to the Society disclaiming responsibility for the girls abandoned in the Salisbury foster home (10). When Charles D.'s sponsor died, her brother did take over payments, but only after clarifying that the agreement was 'a voluntary undertaking, terminable at any time'. It is not, perhaps surprising that this sponsor was initially told that the Society would not admit children whose support could not be guaranteed for longer than a year (11).

However, sponsorship was more than simply a method of securing regular payment. Sponsors not only paid a regular sum towards the support of their particular children, they also were encouraged to build up a relationship with them through letters, gifts, and the occasional visit. Over half the individual sponsors provided clothes for 'their' children, many of them making them themselves. As is evident from Emma H.'s case above, some directly supervised their foster placements. The claims that the children benefited from having a 'lady' to take an interest in them were probably justified. Although many sponsors failed to build up or sustain this type of relationship, others acted as valuable sources of

support: Agnes N.'s sponsor wrote to complain that the Society was failing to keep either herself or the child's father sufficiently informed as to her progress (12). Ada and Richard C. were particularly fortunate in their sponsor, Miss Flower. She had referred them to the Society, and agreed to pay the full cost of their support. When Richard was fourteen he was apprenticed to a carpenter; although by now he might have been expected to support himself, the long apprenticeship meant that his wages would be inadequate for several years to come. Many sponsors would have objected to a prolonged period of dependency, and might well have refused to continue paying maintenance in a case such as this. Indeed a number wrote to the Society suggesting that 'their' children should be placed out in situations at a relatively early age in order that they might be released from their obligations (13). However Miss Flower agreed to supplement Richard's wages until he became self-sufficient at nineteen. When she died, a year before he was able to support himself, her sister took over the last few payments for both Richard and Ada. Miss Flower's generosity not only gave Richard a skilled trade, but also enabled him to remain with the foster mother who had looked after him since his admission (14).

One of the most significant features of the poor law was its attempt to enforce the obligations of parents to maintain their children independently of state support. Those who failed to do so were separated in the workhouse and effectively lost custody. Boards of guardians sometimes displayed lists of children who were about to be emigrated or boarded out in order to encourage relations to reclaim them before their

failure to fulfil their obligations resulted in permanent severance (15). The inability of the very poor to maintain their children was seen as a wilful refusal to accept responsibility, and contributed significantly to the general opprobrium surrounding the parents of separated children. The corollary of this philosophy was that those who maintained the children of third parties were seen to have thereby acquired a right to their permanent custody. This argument formed the basis for the many habeas corpus cases fought by Barnardo and other philanthropists. It was also behind the provisions of the 1891 Custody of Children Act, which allowed both voluntary societies and private foster parents to insist that parents who sought a premature discharge should reimburse the sums that had been spent upon their children (16).

Few of the relationships between sponsor and child were entirely disinterested; although only a small number of sponsors expected a direct return on their investment in the form of the child's labour after discharge (17), many of them felt that by paying for their support they had acquired the parental rights which had been relinquished by those blood relatives who had failed to maintain their proteges. This assumption appears to have been approved by the Society. A number of Waifs and Strays children were supported by the pupils of private schools: in these instances the child was often placed under the supervision of a member of the staff, within the vicinity of the school, so that interested pupils might have a concrete object for their philanthropy. This was regardless of the distance from the child's original home, and the difficulties that would be encountered by relatives

who wanted to visit (18). Other sponsors could insist that a child be placed near them, even if this meant separation from a sibling. When Thomas, Edward and William P. were orphaned, their grandfather gave a home to the eldest boy, William, and he remained in his home town of Aldershot. His brothers were left in the care of an aunt, who applied for their admission to the Waifs and Strays. Edward was sponsored by a Mrs Crawshay, who arranged to place him in a small private home near Reading where she lived. Thomas was supported by a Miss Methuen, who happened also to be the local secretary for Weston-Super-Mare. She offered to pay for his maintenance only on the understanding that he would be placed in her local home at Frome (19).

On the other hand, where a parent's failure to support a child within the Society resulted in premature discharge, there appears to have been no question of also sending home those siblings who had been maintained by third parties. Thus when Mr R. stopped paying maintenance for his elder daughter Eleanor, the Society's agent was sent to investigate whether she should be returned home. His report does not mention the existence of a younger daughter, Lydia, who had been placed in the same home as Eleanor, but was being supported by an unrelated sponsor (20). The presence among the Society's records of cases such as the above, supports the argument that, by providing financial support through the regular payment of maintenance costs, sponsors were seen to have acquired parental rights over their proteges.

In the absence of legally binding contracts, the Society was financially dependent upon the goodwill of its supporters. Sponsors were

often consulted about their children's future, especially if plans would require an extension of the period of dependency. It was probably due to the generosity of his sponsor that James W. was not sent to the workhouse when it became apparent that he would never be fit enough to earn his living, but allowed instead to remain at the Croydon Home until he died (21). Where sponsors were unwilling to prolong the period of payment they were sometimes required to give consent to a child's emigration (22). Sponsors occasionally tried to override the Society's policies: those who were disappointed at the behaviour of 'their' particular children sometimes tried to insist that they be harshly disciplined. Thus Rudolf was criticised by Edith F.'s sponsor for failing to prosecute when she was caught stealing, while Edward H.'s sponsor tried to insist on peremptory emigration for a similar offence (23).

Adoption

The sponsorship relationship hinged on the acquisition of parental rights through the provision of maintenance, and it is significant that the arrangement was often referred to as an adoption. Although there was no statutory provision under English law until 1926, informal contracts of adoption were relatively common in the nineteenth and early twentieth century (see above, chapter 2). So-called adoptions were arranged by several of the major voluntary children's societies, including the Waifs and Strays and Dr Stephenson's Homes. In 1887, the editor of the Christian Million was using his paper to arrange for the 'adoption of the parentless by the childless' on what appears to have been a relatively

widespread scale, and in 1891, the Waifs and Strays magazine carried a letter from someone who claimed to have acted as an adoption agent for nearly eighteen years (24). A major purpose of these agreements was not so much to provide a permanent home for a child as to ensure that those who had made themselves responsible for his financial support could, as far as possible, exercise a right to his custody. Although adoption arrangements generally appear to assume that the child was being physically cared for by the adoptive parents, the emphasis on finance indicates the close similarity to sponsorship arrangements. Both the evidence from the Dr Stephenson's Home records as well as that from the Waifs and Strays suggest that a major consideration in forming such a contract was the parents' inability to fulfil their financial obligations.

Nine of the children in the Waifs and Strays sample left the Society because they had been adopted. In a tenth case (that of Alice S. below) the child died before the agreement could be formalised. A number of other children were placed with adoptive parents, and then returned to the Society when the arrangement broke down (25). In none of these cases were parents or relatives either paying for a child's support, or expected to be in a position to do so in the future. The children had either been accepted as free cases to be paid for from the general fund or else had lost their funding after admission. In every case an adoption relieved the Society of an apparently long-term financial commitment. Thus John S. was an illegitimate child, admitted to the Waifs and Strays as a baby under the usual arrangement through which his mother agreed to pay four shillings per week towards his keep. By the time he was two she had

disappeared, leaving the Society to support him for at least a further ten years. When a request came from a couple wishing to foster a child with a view to adoption if his relatives were unlikely to interfere, it is not surprising that John was chosen. In spite of his having by then spent three years in a secure foster home where he was 'happy, well cared for and loved', stern financial considerations dictated that he should be moved to the prospective adopters. Indeed, their position was so strong that they were allowed to take John 'on approval' for two years, receiving just over half the boarding-out allowance, before they finally decided to accept full financial responsibility for him, and he was officially discharged to their care (26).

It is obvious from this and other cases that a major attraction of adoption was seen to be its ability to relieve the Society of its long-term financial responsibilities. The need to reduce expenses was so great, that adoptive parents were welcomed, with little if any inquiry made as to their suitability to care for a child. A willingness to take over full financial support, together with perhaps an address that denoted membership of the 'superior classes', was often considered sufficient recommendation. Thus in the case of Amy W. it was considered acceptable for the woman who had agreed to act as her sponsor after reading of her case in the Society's magazine, to arrange for her admission to an obscure private children's home and then, on a whim, to intercept her on her way there, and take over her custody (27). Once a sponsor had taken over the custody as well as the finance of a child, an adoption was considered to have taken place, and the case was closed, without any attempt to monitor

the child's subsequent welfare. It is hardly surprising that a proportion of adoptions failed, and some children were returned to the Society as their protectors became disenchanted with the original hasty agreement (28).

Although the Society undoubtedly gained financially from agreements to adopt, the benefits to the adoptive parents were not always so clear. Until 1891 there were no legal means by which determined relatives could be deterred from reclaiming their children, and there were many claims that this was a common practice once the years of dependency were over. The Custody of Children Act of 1891 did allow third parties to withstand a writ of habeas corpus if the parents could be judged unfit. It also made it possible to compensate adoptive parents who lost custody by making relatives liable to repay the money that had been spent upon the child (29). However it provided no real security in disputed cases where relatives were leading respectable lives. Adoption contracts attempted to fill this gap by laying down the custody arrangements, often in legalistic terms. Nevertheless, the Waifs and Strays executive must have known that such contracts did not have the force of law. It is uncertain how far adoptive parents were aware of their position, though it seems likely that relatives were led to believe in the validity of the agreement.

Some of the Waifs and Strays adoption contracts were relatively informal. In fact, with most of the cases where parents had already lost contact, it is doubtful whether any written arrangement was ever drawn up. In other cases there was no formal document: Edward W. was adopted through the agency of the Society, directly from his family home. His father

had died, leaving his mother in uncertain health, and with five children, all under the age of ten. When she was well she could earn five shillings a week through taking in washing, but her only regular source of income was 4s 9d outdoor relief, paid in kind. Her brother-in-law had agreed to help support three of the children, and applications to the Waifs and Strays were made on behalf of the two youngest boys, John and Edward, aged respectively eight and four. John was admitted immediately as a free case, supported by the general fund. Edward was placed on the waiting list, and his circumstances advertised in the Society's journal. A Miss Empson answered the advertisement: her letter spelled out the terms under which she was prepared to take complete responsibility for him:

I wish to make my offer to provide for this child until he is old enough to take care of himself - to see that he is carefully brought up. If his mother consents that I should have the entire control of him - and be responsible for him - and is willing to let me decide - as circumstances in the future may determine, whether he comes home to visit her or not. I should be very glad if it proves practicable - I mean desirable for him to do so but I make no promises - I hope she will write to me should I take care of the child and I promise to write to her at stated intervals (30).

Ten days later the vicar who had referred the case wrote to say that Edward's mother had 'consented to surrender her child to the control of Miss Empson' (31). Although the Society arranged the adoption, Miss Empson does not appear to have been asked to produce references. There is no evidence that her credentials were ever checked, or indeed that a representative of the Waifs and Strays ever met her. We do not know whether she kept her promise to write to Edward's mother, for, as was normal practice, once the child had been placed in her care, all contact with the Society ceased.

Had Edward's mother's circumstances changed at a later date, she might well have been able to reclaim him , for her informal contract with Miss Empson had no legal force. In the case of Alice S., the Society's solicitors attempted to draw up a more formal agreement in order to deter her relatives from attempting to regain custody. Alice became an orphan at the age of two. She was the youngest of seven children. The Anglican sisterhood at the Eton Mission arranged for the youngest boy, Albert, to be placed privately by 'a lady', and applied to the Waifs and Strays on behalf of the two girls, Alice and her twelve-year-old sister Amelia. The other four boys remained in the family home on a reasonable income, as three of them were working. Amelia was placed in the Society's home at Leamington, while Alice was placed with a Mr and Mrs Moore, who had applied to adopt a young child, initially on a six month's trial basis. In the meantime the Society's solicitors were asked to draw up a formal agreement. Although the sister at the mission claimed that her relatives 'were willing that Alice should be entirely adopted', six months later her elder brother Frank applied for the discharge of his two sisters. He appears to have been unaware of any consent to adoption: 'considering they have been away since last January,'he wrote,'I think it only natural I should want them back now'(32).

The initial reaction of the Society was to ignore this request, but when Frank began to press for a reply, Rudolf was forced to write to the adoptive parents, asking them to return Alice. He received a somewhat aggrieved letter from Mr Moore,expressing:

the greatest surprise that a society so excellent in its motives should have conducted the case in a manner that makes

it possible for such an application as that of the brother to be for one moment entertained.

We were of course under the impression that the child had been handed over to the society after a legal document by which the relatives relinquished all future claims had been prepared and duly signed.

If this is not done, what a terrible playing with the feelings of those activated by the most sacred motives results.

His letter went on to point out how deeply indebted the Society was to people like himself, who offered to adopt its proteges:

I am very loath indeed to write in at all a mercenary spirit in the matter, but I cannot help thinking that after the money we have willingly expended upon the child, and thus relieved the society of a very considerable expense which would otherwise have been incurred had she have been boarded out for the time she has been with us, it (the society) could well have afforded a representative to have more fully informed us of the facts of the case...

I trust you will be able to obtain the brother's signature to a legal document which will avoid all future trouble in the matter both for our own sakes and in the interest of the society as if the circumstances were made public by recourse to legal proceedings it would indeed have a very deterrent effect upon all similarly disposed people as ourselves (33).

A formal contract had in fact been drawn up by the Society's solicitors. By its terms, Mr Moore was to agree to adopt Alice and bring her up in all respects as if she were his own child. Her brother, 'so far as he can legally do so' was to 'abandon his rights as natural guardian in favour of Mr Moore'. Although he was to be allowed 'all reasonable and proper facilities for seeing and corresponding with his sister', he also had to agree that he would 'not without the consent of Mr Moore visit or correspond with his sister' and that he would 'do all in his power to prevent her brothers, sisters and other relatives communicating directly or indirectly with her'.

This agreement was laid out with all the solemnity the Waifs and Strays solicitors could muster. It was copied out onto the thick paper of legal documents in a fine copperplate hand, and tied with red tape. A space was left for the signatures of both parties, and of their witnesses. Anyone reading the document would have assumed that it was a full contract, carrying all the weight of English Law. Yet the accompanying letter from the solicitors warned the Society that such arrangements carried no legal validity (34).

Both parties continued to argue over custody and access. Frank S. claimed that the Society had originally agreed to release Alice only if he would also reclaim his other sister, Amelia, a condition which he had fulfilled. Mr. Moore argued that his solicitor had advised him that 'no court of law would recognise a proceeding so detrimental to the child's future welfare' and that the brother, not having been appointed by the father, could not claim to be the true guardian. It was, perhaps, fortunate for the Society that the agreement was never tested in court, as the outcome of the other custody cases fought by nineteenth century philanthropic societies would suggest that its spurious nature, and perhaps Rudolf's awareness of it, would have been inevitably revealed (35). Eventually the argument died down: Alice remained with the Moores, but she died a few months later, before her position was clarified. Her brother was allowed to visit the grave, but the address of the adoptive parents was never revealed to him (36). The adoption contract remains among Alice's case-papers, unsigned.

There is no doubt that the Moores were able to offer Alice a home that

was, in material terms, infinitely superior to the one she had left, and indeed this was one of their major arguments for refusing to relinquish custody. At a time when newspapers carried regular reports of deaths from starvation, and when the infant mortality rate in some areas was 25% (37), it was possible to claim that an improvement in a child's physical environment could literally tip the scales towards his living to maturity.

Although the numbers are too small for generalisation, it does appear that younger children tended to be adopted by childless or bereaved couples who were happy to undertake their support in order to fill a gap in their own lives. Six of the children in the Waifs and Strays sample were under the age of eight when they were placed out for adoption. In spite of a woefully inadequate vetting procedure, the little evidence that survives does suggest that younger children who were adopted by the Society's supporters could derive enormous benefits from the arrangement. Annie S. was committed to the Beckett Home at the age of four under Section 14 of the 1866 Industrial Schools Act (38). It is possible that her parents had died or deserted her. After eighteen months she was placed out on license to a Mr and Mrs Stead who later adopted her. She was treated as a 'daughter of the house with a great deal of affection on both sides', and in later life claimed that her adoptive parents 'were all that could be desired' (39). However even where an adoption was successful, the absence of a proper legal framework caused considerable administrative complications. Although Annie S.'s adoptive parents made her their heir, she was obliged to pay an additional 10% in death duties because no

formal adoption order had been drawn up. The death certificate of a child who died while in the care of adoptive parents, still had to be signed under his original name: a detail that could cause immense problems if his origins had been deliberately concealed (40).

However, not all the adoptions were arranged for very young children. Where an older child was offered a home in exchange for his keep, one wonders how altruistic the arrangement really was, for adolescents could be valuable sources of labour. Robert B. was adopted at the age of fourteen by a coalmining family, on the understanding that he would work in the pit with the husband (41). Harriet C. was adopted at the age of twelve by a maiden lady who may well have wanted a cheap servant (42). Although older children placed out under such agreements may have been offered secure homes by loving foster parents, the arrangement was open to exploitation. The lack of after-care meant that this would have gone undetected. It is interesting to note that the shortcomings of the Waifs and Strays' adoption arrangements in England in the 1880s were very similar to those found by Andrew Doyle in his investigation of Maria Rye and Annie MacPherson's work with emigrant children in Canada a decade earlier. There was the same failure to vet prospective foster parents or to follow up placements, justified by the same faith in the motivation of supporters who came from 'a superior class'. There were the same rare, but nonetheless real, advantages for younger children, and the same risks for older children. 'Doption, sir', said a seventeen-year-old girl to Doyle in a much-quoted phrase, 'is when folks gets a girl to work without wages.' (43).

The 'Flower of the Flock'

Only a very small percentage of the Waifs and Strays children were completely removed from the Society's responsibility through adoption. A much more efficient route through which the costs of long-term dependency could be significantly reduced was emigration.

About eighty thousand unattached British children were sent out as child emigrants to Canada between 1868 and 1925. Thousands more went to Australia, New Zealand, Tasmania, South Africa and the Caribbean. They were emigrated by boards of guardians and the voluntary societies as an integral part of their child care policy. Although they actually sent out only about 10% of their children, the Waifs and Strays played a fairly prominent part in the movement to emigrate children to Canada; as has already been seen some of their more influential supporters were deeply committed to the scheme.

Canada was represented to both children and supporters as a land of opportunity, where English pauper children would have the chance of reaching a standard of living that would have been unattainable at home. As a corollary to this, and to allay Canadian fears of being 'swamped with the refuse of the workhouses', those who were offered this advantage were represented as being only the best and brightest children: the 'flower of the flock' (44).

A wide body of research has already shown how greatly the reality of juvenile emigration fell short of the dream; the experiences of the Waifs and Strays children appear to have been no different from those of the Barnardo and pauper children already described by Parr, Parker, Bean and

Melville (45). Parker examines the extent to which the demand for emigrant children reflected the needs of the Canadian labour market; Parr discusses how far emigration was used by the voluntary societies as a means of severing the relationship between children and their undesirable relatives. The present study demonstrates how closely emigration policies were linked to financial considerations, and how false was the description of those who went.

The cost of equipping and transporting parties of children to Canada was subsidised by grants from the Canadian authorities. In 1887 the cost to the Society was calculated at £7 for each child, the equivalent of six months' maintenance within the homes (46). Once they had left the country, children cost the Society a negligible sum, for after a minimal period spent in the Canadian receiving homes they were placed out as farm labourers and domestic servants, and were expected to earn their own keep.

Although emigration was considered in the cases of 76 of the Waifs and Strays sample, only 43 children actually went to Canada. Ten of these children were sent directly from the poor law schools, with the Society acting simply as an emigration agency. The case-papers contain very little information about their antecedents, though once they had reached Canada, the Society's agent sent back annual reports about their progress. Poor law children were openly sent abroad because no liable relative could be found and emigration was viewed as an effective means of reducing the rates (47). It is therefore of considerable interest that of the remaining 33 Waifs and Strays emigrants, sixteen (50%) appear to have been sent abroad largely as a means of reducing costs. Two of this group of children

were admitted solely for the purpose of emigration and spent a negligible period in the Society's English homes. However, many of the others had spent several years in the Society's care before they left for Canada. As with the children who were adopted, the majority were free cases supported, at least by the time of their emigration, entirely by the general fund. Only two emigrants in the sample were being maintained by a parent; one had been admitted solely for the purpose of emigration, and in the other case, the father was obliged to pay maintenance under a court order, the NSPCC having obtained custody (48). A more typical case was Charles T., emigrated after his widowed mother had given up the struggle to contribute 86% of her wages towards his support, and absconded (49). Similarly, prior to his emigration, James W. had been supported almost entirely by the Cheshire fund, his mother having ceased contributing towards his maintenance within a year of his admission (50). In fact, before a child was sent to Canada, relatives who had not yet lost contact were required to sign a declaration, agreeing to emigration on the grounds that they were 'unable to provide for' him (51). Once again, parents' inability to fulfill their financial obligations towards their children was seen as a valid reason for their permanently losing custody.

The average age at which the emigrant children left for Canada was twelve years and ten months. This was well over a year earlier than the average age at which others left the Society's care for employment, and thus reduced the period of dependency by a noticeable amount. Only minimal information about after-care has survived, but it is

clear that very little was spent on the children once they had left the country. Apparently young emigrants could only expect an annual visit from the supervisor. Moreover, the costs of providing accommodation for those who had lost their jobs were cut to a minimum: in 1895, Edith M. wrote from Canada to the superintendent of the Dickleburgh home in England:

I have left my place at Montral because they wanted a bigger girl than me. I went back to the Home till I got another place, you asked me when you wrote to me if there was a home to go back to yes. But this is the last time I may go back to it....I am going to see how long I can stay here, for I shall have nowhere to go if I leave here all the girls ho are 15 are not aloude to go back to the home, they say I am 15 will you please wright and tell me my right age (52).

A later chapter will consider how such inadequate after-care compared with that offered the children who stayed in England.

The efficacy with which emigration could reduce costs was openly admitted. Indeed, when the Society's finances were at a particularly low ebb, admission was restricted to those children whose parents agreed to their being immediately sent abroad. It seems likely that the emigration admission forms, which were completed solely for children who were admitted on the understanding that they would shortly leave the country, and were in use for a brief period in the early 1890s, were introduced as a cost-cutting exercise (53).

The emphasis on the cost-effectiveness of emigration suggests that it would have been difficult to preserve it as a privilege. If under-funded children were sent abroad to save the Society expense, how was it possible to ensure that only the best and brightest children were allowed to go ?

Of the 41 children sent out to Canada by the Society, only a very few

could obviously have been described as the 'flower of the Waifs and Strays flock'. Thomas T., one of the children directly emigrated from a poor law school:

has always born a good character, he has been employed in the carpenter's shop for the last three years, and will be found very useful in a farm to do odd jobs in the carpentering line. He is also in the band and can play the sax and euphonium very nicely and can site read fairly well (54).

Annie L. spent nine years at the Newport Pagnell home apparently without incident, and then at sixteen was sent to join her sister in Toronto. Similarly, Nicholas J. and James W. both spent two unremarkable years in homes run by the Chester diocese before going abroad (55).

On the other hand, a third (33%) of the emigrants had shown serious behaviour problems before they were sent abroad. Some child emigrants had been described as persistent liars, or in need of discipline, shortly before their departure. Two had lost jobs through incompetence or dishonesty. Seven of them had experienced the unexpected breakdown of a placement due to such difficulties as their persistent night-time incontinence, aggressive behaviour, promiscuity or dishonesty. For some children this had happened on several occasions: Alice H. was removed from two sets of foster parents on account of her disruptive behaviour before she was placed in the Dickleburgh home at the age of ten. While there, she 'wrote most improperly on her slate to one of the boys in school-time', and the sexual experiences of her early childhood became apparent. Mrs Brandreth, the supervisor, felt that it was unsafe to keep her in a home where the children went out to the local (mixed) school; moreover, she 'lowered the tone' of this home for poor law children. She

was therefore sent to Cold Ash, where she gave no trouble, but at twelve she was removed to the home in Brighton, presumably for training. She was caught stealing there, and ostracised until she could be removed to the Peckham Laundry Home. Four months later, at the age of sixteen, with eight, mostly unsatisfactory, placements behind her, she was emigrated (56).

Eighteen months before she left for Canada, Alice was described as having weak eyesight and 'something wrong with her nose bone'. When she left the Brighton Home she was believed to be suffering from an unspecified health problem which rendered her unsuitable as an inmate of a Waifs and Strays home. She was only one of several potential emigrants who, in spite of indifferent health, succeeded in passing the medical examination. Edith S. had previously suffered from ulcerated eyes, which were believed to be due to syphilis ;George P.was 'never very strong' and Charles T. was passed as 'having sufficient bodily strength for farm work' with the contradictory proviso that he was 'not very robust' (57).

It was not an overt policy of the Society to refer its more difficult children for emigration: indeed, the 1895 Handbook for Workers specifically stated:

There are, of course, many children who give trouble in the Society's Homes, and the thought may possibly occur to the Local Committee and matrons that it would be a good plan to send them to Canada, as it would be an advantage to the children in the Home to remove from amongst them those who are exercising a bad influence. This, however, should not be the motive in choosing children (58).

However, the evidence described above suggests that the temptation to do so was often irresistible, particularly as the children grew older, and

the chance of their growing up to be a credit to the Society seemed more remote; the average age of the troublesome emigrants was exactly a year higher than that of the group as a whole. While the sight of a group of twenty neatly dressed children setting off each morning for the village school can only have served as a positive recommendation to potential subscribers, the same children, grown to ungainly and surly adolescence, and repeatedly returning to a home after yet another failed situation, cannot have avoided attracting attention in a small community. It is not surprising that the desire to dispose of the failures was sometimes irresistible. Nor is it remarkable that many children, with this type of antecedent, found that that the golden opportunities of Canada eluded them.

Troublesome children were not only sent abroad to save the Society's reputation and its money. The existence of a disaffected underclass in nineteenth century Britain was well-recognised as a source of potential unrest, and a threat to society (59). Barnardo claimed that:

the rapid spread of (socialist and nihilist) principles that would subvert orderly government and banish the Bible from the world is not a sign of the times to regard with composure...Every boy rescued from the gutter is one dangerous man the less (60).

Many ardent supporters of emigration regarded it as a means of ridding the country of its dangerous element (61). It is not, perhaps, fanciful to suppose that a hidden motive behind the emigration of some of the more difficult children was the fear that they would grow into subversive and rebellious adults; after all, this had been the reasoning behind the earlier, related policy of transportation.

Premature Discharge and the Grievous Incubus

Before they were capable of supporting themselves thirty-six of the sample children were unexpectedly reclaimed by their relations, sixteen died, and a further nine were adopted. The vast majority of the remainder stayed in the Society's care until they obtained a situation at around the age of fourteen. Even then, as a later chapter will show, few could entirely manage without continuing support. When they lost their jobs through ill-health or, more frequently, unacceptable behaviour, they returned to the homes for further training and shelter until they were ready to venture out into the world again.

Few sponsors were prepared to support children whom they felt were ready to earn a living, and in fact many took a harsher view than Rudolf of the age at which their charges should expect to be independent (62). Moreover, it seems unlikely that many sponsors renewed their payments after a child had been sacked from a first or second situation. Thus as they approached maturity adolescents tended to lose their funding. In many instances this was not a serious problem, as older children provided a valuable source of unpaid labour, upon which some of the homes openly relied. Not only were they expected to undertake much of the domestic work of the homes, they also worked in the industrial training schemes, some of which were extremely profitable. In 1889, the children earned £1,353 :nearly 4% of the Society's total income (63).

However, there remained a small obstinate core of young people who, through their ill-health or disturbed behaviour, would clearly never succeed in reaching independence. Children who went to Canada were

required to pass a medical examination and provide a character reference. Although there are clear indications that many disturbed or unfit children were sent abroad, the formal procedures must have served in some respects as a restraining influence, and few of the seriously ill or maladjusted were allowed to go. Nor, indeed, would they have been accepted by the Canadian authorities. In the philanthropist C.A.Stein's vivid phrase, each of these became a 'grievous incubus' to the Waifs and Strays, for not only were they unable to sustain employment themselves, but their disturbed behaviour damaged the Society's reputation and acted as a deterrent to potential subscribers.

Although some of these young people had clearly been damaged by their history prior to admission, others were casualties of care, their disturbance the probable result of their experiences while under the protection of the Society. Thus at the age of one year, Phoebe M. was separated from her disreputable mother and her two siblings and placed as 'home baby' in the Cold Ash Home, presumably in order to give the girls there practical experience of nursemaiding. Two years later she was boarded out, and then removed from the foster home to be placed with a single woman who had 'undertaken to keep her free of charge and practically adopt her'. This broke down within five years, and there then followed a series of fourteen further placements interspersed by unsuccessful attempts at employment, before she eventually turned up in Lambeth Union at the age of eighteen, pregnant and rejected by her siblings (64).

There was a fairly restricted range of options open for such children. Phoebe was at one stage admitted to the Croydon Union and, at the

Society's request, adopted by the guardians under the 1889 Act. This meant that Rudolf, acting as their representative, could compel her to remain in the Society's Clapham Home until she reached eighteen, as, 'in her present frame of mind, if she were discharged she would no doubt get into serious trouble' (65). A year later, when she was seventeen, the Society could no longer contain her behaviour, and she was discharged to the workhouse.

In 1895, Rudolf told the Mundella Committee: 'we have never, I think, sent back a child to the workhouse of our own action, during the existence of the Society' (66). This seems unlikely, for eight (2%) of the sample cases were finally sent there as a last resort. Caroline P., for instance, went back to Wandsworth Union when she began to threaten suicide, as the staff at the Winchester home felt unable to cope with the responsibility of retaining her (67). At the age of thirteen, Annie B was discharged to Harrow workhouse, Miss Stansfeld claiming that 'this girl will be on the society's hands all her life unless sent to the workhouse - she is not quite 'all there' but is perfectly harmless (68).

Each child who was discharged to the workhouse represented a visible proof of failure to a society that advertised its ability to rescue children from the detrimental effects of public provision. A preferable option was to refer the more difficult children to one of the other voluntary organisations that specialised in dealing with recalcitrant cases (69); girls who became pregnant were discharged to refuges, and exceptionally disruptive children of both sexes were sent to reformatories (70). There was also a large number of private homes, often run by religious orders, which specialised in the disciplining and training of

older girls who had failed in employment. However, these voluntary organisations often faced the same problems as the Society, and could not be relied upon to keep the more difficult children. Many of them also charged considerable fees for their services (71). Apart from the workhouse, there were really only two major options when it became clear that a child might never become self-sufficient: premature discharge or emigration.

Fifty-five (14%) of the sample children returned prematurely to their relations, that is, before they reached the age of fourteen. Of these, at least thirty-six returned at their parents' request; their cases will be considered in the next chapter. Many of the others were sent home at the Society's insistence, sometimes against the wishes of parents who had neither the inclination nor the resources to resume care. I have already shown how a proportion of these returned home because their parents failed to keep up an agreement to contribute to their maintenance. In the 1890s the Society spelt out a number of other limitations to its provision of care. Potential referrers were told:

It must be distinctly understood that should a child who has been accepted by the society be found eventually to be unsuitable to remain under its care for any reason (either physical, mental or moral), the Executive will have no option but to return the child to its relatives (72, their emphasis).

Only five of the sample children were actually discharged to relatives when their poor health or their disturbed behaviour made it evident that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find them employment, but for several others this option was seriously considered. Katie R. was

admitted at the age of four on the grounds that she was an 'illegitimate child with a striving mother'. When she was eleven it was decided that her weak heart would always prevent her from taking employment and her mother was asked to reclaim her. Katie's mother was a nurse, and unable to provide a home for her; an aunt finally agreed to take her in (73). Many of the children suffered from the nocturnal incontinence that is commonly associated with emotional disturbance. This tended to bar them from the residential occupations favoured by the Society, and thus materially reduced their chances of finding 'suitable' employment. After several arguments between the local committee and the executive, Edith B. was eventually returned to her mother partly because her disruptive behaviour had upset the other inmates of the Clapham home, but also because her incontinence rendered her virtually unemployable (74). This case is of particular interest because the tension between the executive's desire to save money, and the local committee's determination not to see their efforts wasted, was brought out into the open. When the question of Edith's discharge home was first raised, the local secretary rebuked Rudolf:

I was very disappointed at your letter this morning about E. B. and S.N. I do not see the good of keeping a girl ten years as we have done the latter and then sending them back to their poor homes or no homes...(75)

She went on to suggest that Edith's mother was by no means a fit person to be entrusted with the care of a difficult adolescent, and indeed managed to prevent her discharge for a further two and a half years (76).

In fact, of course, the local committee had a very valid point: in several cases the necessity to reduce the number of permanent 'incubi'

placed the Society in the ironic position of attempting to return children to the very relatives from whom they had been rescued. Lily J. for instance, was recommended for emigration in order to destroy the link with her undesirable relatives; however she failed to pass the medical. When she was later discovered to have tuberculosis, a discharge was recommended to those very relatives (77)! Lily was one of the several children for whom premature discharge was recommended, but not enforced.

The abortive Adoption of Children Bill of 1889 contained a clause allowing Boards of Guardians to disregard any formal order and enforce the obligations of natural parents if an adopted child became chargeable to the state (78). Although very few of the Waifs and Strays children actually went home when it became clear that they had little chance of becoming self-sufficient, the fact that this appears to have been the first option to be explored in a large number of cases, suggests that the Society regarded the position of natural parents with a similar degree of ambivalence.

This ambivalence towards natural parents is a recurring theme in child-care policy. Although the Society was founded to rescue the deprived and abused children of the poor, a range of circumstances prevented it from adopting the parental role in its entirety. Insecure and inadequate funding meant that children were irresponsibly farmed out to unknown well-wishers. Fear of unwelcome publicity and a similar shortage of funds encouraged the emigration of a number of inappropriate candidates. Finally, if all else failed, parents who had been previously dismissed as unfit could be rehabilitated in order to relieve the Waifs

and Strays of a permanent burden: in fact, however much the Society sought to appropriate custody, the ultimate responsibility of permanent, uncritical lifelong commitment was probably beyond its intentions, and certainly outside its resources (79).

CHAPTER TEN: SEVERANCE

Worse than Orphans

There is no doubt that in late nineteenth century Britain there were many children who urgently needed protection from abusive relatives. In the 1880s and 1890s, investigations by the newly-formed NSPCC were beginning to reveal numerous cases of ill-treatment that easily matched the causes celebres of today. Some of the more severely abused children were permanently separated from their relatives and placed in the care of the voluntary societies: Louisa E., whose mother had achieved a degree of notoriety by forcing her to share a bed with her father's corpse, was committed to a Waifs and Strays home (1) ; Barnardo claimed to have bought for a sovereign two children who were being brought up to prostitution (2); the NSPCC removed from the streets several tubercular children, whose parents had made them go out to beg in the thinnest of clothes, in order to arouse sympathy (3).

All the major voluntary societies relied heavily on the evidence from these and similar cases to publicise their work. Parents were almost universally depicted as worthless creatures, whose continuing influence over their innocent children would inevitably lead to their downfall (4). Yet the evidence from the Waifs and Strays sample suggests that this was very far from the case. Table 8.1 above has demonstrated that only about one in three of those children admitted to the Society during the sample years could genuinely have been described as rescue cases. Table 10.1 breaks down the evidence in more detail and shows the overall

TABLE 10.1

INCIDENCE OF POSSIBLE GROUNDS FOR ADMISSION
(Waifs and Strays sample data 1887-1894:400 CASES)

<u>GROUND</u>	<u>FREQUENCY*</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE*</u>
Behaviour problems at home	56	14.0
Mental illness of parent	11	2.7
Homelessness of parent	15	3.7
Offending	12	3.0
Physical illness of parent	34	8.5
Lone mother unable to provide: widow	78	19.5
unmarried mother	28	7.0
Non-accidental injury (including severe neglect)	32	8.0
Truancy	16	4.0
Moral danger	98	24.5
Death of parent within the previous year	103	25.7
Imprisonment of parent	9	2.2

***Categories not exclusive**

incidence of a range of possible grounds for admission among the sample cases. Although a large number of children were considered to have been at some risk of physical or sexual abuse, it should be remembered that this figure would have been inflated by the common tendency of referrers to exaggerate the dangers when presenting cases which might otherwise have been excluded as inadmissible: even so, about half the children were not considered to have been at any risk. Moreover, the table shows that the commonest factor behind a request for admission was not the risk of abuse, but the recent death of a parent. Further evidence shows that at least a third of the children had 'respectable' parents who were in no way regarded as a threat to their well-being. Why, then, were children's relatives almost invariably described in perjorative terms?

One reason was simply propaganda: potential subscribers were far more likely to respond to the lurid threats of child prostitution and physical abuse than to the dreariness of everyday poverty. Thus successful publicity depended upon emphasising the rescue side of the work; there was little virtue in saving children unless they could be represented as being in danger. To a certain extent, perhaps, those who ran the societies came to believe their own propaganda, and the more memorable cases assumed an exaggerated importance. Attitudes tended to polarise, and the pernicious influence of some parents came to be regarded as a characteristic of them all. Referrers tended to judge the families whom they sought to help by their own standards, and rarely made allowances for poverty, inadequate water supplies or overwork: local agents had few of the modern inhibitions about adverse labelling, and

their many derogatory remarks must have reinforced the impression that most parents had little to offer the children whom they had failed. Moreover, the prevailing ideology tended to regard destitution and depravity as manifestations of the same shortcomings: both were seen as culpable conditions that required correction rather than sympathy.

Secondly, a perjorative view of the children's relatives was useful in that it allowed the major voluntary societies to justify policies designed to sever their charges' links with home. From the moment of admission, the child's relationship with his family was carefully manipulated: letters and visits from parents were strictly controlled, placements were often chosen to discourage undesirable contacts, and a number of children were sent abroad in order to secure a clean break with their antecedents. Such manoeuvres could be interpreted as a means of protecting children from the unwelcome attentions of cruel relations, but they also had a more fundamental purpose: admission ensured that a child not only left the, potentially pernicious, influence of his relatives, but also that he passed into the beneficial sphere of an organisation designed to promote the standards and assumptions of a superior social class.

Many people saw the work of the voluntary societies as a political means of exerting social control over the children of the poor. Particularly within the residential homes, children were subject to a regime intended to civilise them by curbing individuality and eradicating unruliness. Their lives were determined by a strict time-table which not only served the demands of institutional life, but also instilled habits

of punctuality, regularity and deference to authority. The inculcation of such habits would, it was argued, prevent the children of the poor from adopting the dangerously egalitarian socialist principles their parents were assumed to possess.

More overtly prominent than the political aims of the societies was their religious motivation. Inspired by Christ's admonition to 'suffer little children to come unto me', they tended to see their task as 'a divine mission to seek additions to the fold of the master'. The pervasive evangelism of the child rescue movement has been discussed in Chapter 3. Dr Stephenson was only one of many philanthropists who regarded their homes as 'a mission to the souls of children in connection with which, because of peculiar circumstances, it becomes necessary to clothe and feed them' (5). When a child's soul was at stake, it was necessary to resist the influence of relatives whose religious commitment was less than whole-hearted.

Thus the rescue societies sought not only to save children from physical ill-treatment, but also to deflect their minds from dangerous philosophies and to reclaim their souls from perdition. Such a programme could not be effectively implemented if relatives retained a powerful hold over the child's emotions. Contact with parents tended to weaken the societies' influence. Children who returned home not only risked ill-treatment and deprivation, they also placed in jeopardy their careful training and, indeed, their hope of salvation.

Most of the supporters of the child rescue movement therefore, subscribed to an ideology which accepted that the destruction of family

links was an essential part of the work. However necessary it was to return unemployable children to their families ,(see p.314 above), the practice was not one which the societies could publicise, for it was diametrically opposed to the principles upon which they had been founded: that effective rescue entailed the child's complete severance from his former surroundings. The gradual withering of links with relatives was a phenomeneon to be applauded; those who persisted in maintaining contact threatened the success of the intervention. Parents who sought the return of a child of employable age were generally considered to be motivated by blind self-interest; they were regularly dismissed as parasites who waited for their children's discharge so that they could regain control, and drag them down to their level once more.

Publicly, the Waifs and Strays was eager to endorse such policies. Semi-fictional accounts of child rescue published in the monthly magazine dwelt on the cruelty of drunken parents. Speeches and sermons by the clerical secretaries regularly condemned their pernicious influence. Emigration was formally promoted as a means of permanently destroying links. Both Rudolf and Horsley gave evidence to the Mundella Committee as to the need for severance and the means by which it might be achieved (6). An earlier chapter has, however, suggested that while support for severance was fairly high amongst local secretaries and amongst some members of the executive, Rudolf himself tended to act as a moderating influence, restraining his over-zealous supporters from exceeding their legal mandate. Occasional instances in which particularly respectable relatives were quietly allowed to act as foster parents to their own

children have already been mentioned. The following analysis will further examine the extent to which the Society's official policies affected the experiences of individual children.

Emigration

All the major voluntary societies acted on the realisation that the most effective, permanent, method of severance was emigration. John Middlemore, who founded the Emigration Homes in Birmingham, claimed that:

The principle on which we act is that Birmingham is the worst place for the child of a Birmingham criminal. Let there be a complete breach from their early associations. Let them be taken right away, be seasick, see icebergs, learn to talk through their noses of dollars and cents, and have their lives turned entirely upside down. The New World is, in the fullest sense, a new world to them (7).

Like the other major voluntary societies, the Waifs and Strays publicly acknowledged the advantages of a policy which permanently severed a child's links with home. The annual reports contain repeated exhortations to local committees to improve the emigration statistics, drawing their attention 'to the necessity for removing children as far as possible from their former bad surroundings when placing them out in the world' (8). The 1891 Industrial Schools Act, which empowered the managers of industrial schools to emigrate committed children before their term of detention had expired, and without the consent of their parents, was publicised in the Society's report (9). In 1897, Rudolf was involved in a campaign to persuade the Government of Ontario to reduce the restrictions it planned to impose on intended immigrants, on the grounds that 'philanthropists and others can furnish ample proof of the great benefit to the children by

thus removing them entirely from their former evil surroundings' (10). Nevertheless, the number of Waifs and Strays children who left the country remained small: only 11% of Waifs and Strays children emigrated, as compared with 27% from Barnardo's and 35% from Dr Stephenson's Homes. The reason for this discrepancy lies, not so much in Rudolf's views on the advantages of severance, as in those of the children and their parents (11).

It was widely known that many parents who were willing to place their children in the care of the voluntary societies objected to their emigration for the very reasons that the societies favoured it: once a child had gone to Canada it was virtually impossible to reclaim him. Moreover, both parties acknowledged that it was a daunting task to try to keep alive an already weakened relationship when there was little hope of ever seeing the child again, especially if poor education meant that letters were major undertakings.

Until the Industrial Schools Act of 1891, children who were the subject of industrial schools orders could not legally be sent to the colonies without their parents' permission. Even then, children who had been committed to voluntary societies under fit person orders, or who were maintained by the Home Office in reformatories and industrial schools were not allowed to emigrate without the Home Secretary's consent. Poor law children had to give their formal consent before a magistrate before they were allowed to sail. There were, however, no legal requirements for the consent to emigration of voluntary children although, as has previously been mentioned, most rescue societies sought to provide

themselves with a defence against later accusations of treachery by requiring parents to agree to emigration as a condition of the child's admission (12).

Philanthropists were well aware that, once an agreement to emigration had been secured, it was not advisable to reopen the question, however long the period between the date of admission and the proposed date of departure. They were not legally required to inform parents that plans were being made for a child to leave the country, though as Barnardo discovered, those who failed to do so could find themselves in an awkward position if relatives tried to reclaim a child who had sailed (13). However, the risk of being faced with a writ of habeas corpus was minimal. The opprobrium in which many of the parents were held ensured that the voluntary societies were generally praised for the facility with which they were able to spirit children away from the clutches of rapacious relatives. Tales of philanthropic abduction were part of Barnardo's publicity material (14). It is quite evident both from recent research and from contemporary law-suits, that many relatives were deliberately kept in ignorance of plans to send their children abroad. Parr examined the case histories of a sample of children who emigrated from Barnardo's during a similar period to that of the current study. She found that information which might have enabled parents to object to emigration plans was carefully restricted to those who were judged respectable. Impending emigration was deliberately concealed from parents whose possible intervention was considered undesirable. About 25% of parents whose children emigrated from Barnardo's between 1882 and 1908 were never

informed that they had left the country (15).

The Waifs and Strays Society had a more rigorous emigration procedure than some of its rivals. As has already been mentioned, the application form in use during the sample years was so designed as to enable parents to agree to admission without necessarily consenting to emigration. We have already seen that the majority of parents of Waifs and Strays children held serious reservations about emigration, and that about a third of them refused at the time of application to give their consent (see above, p.245). Moreover an initial compliance with the possibility of emigration at the time of admission was not regarded as binding. All parents whose children were seriously being considered for emigration were also required to sign a formal consent form before they left the country. It was this requirement which proved to be a major stumbling block, for many parents and other relatives simply refused to give consent, and unless they did so, Rudolf would not allow their children to sail (16).

The possibility of emigration is known to have been considered in the cases of 76 (19%) of the children in the Waifs and Strays sample. However, only just over half of these children (57%) actually went to Canada. It is not possible to tell why some proposals for emigration never came to fruition. In a number of other cases, plans fell through when it became apparent that a child was either too disturbed or too unhealthy to meet even the Society's somewhat lax criteria for selection (see Chapter 9). Caroline P., who was eventually returned to the workhouse when the staff at Connaught House could no longer cope with her threats of suicide, has been mentioned before. The initial plan, rejected by the executive

committee, had been to send her to Canada (17).

Both parents and children must have been aware that emigration would mean the probable end of their relationship. The evidence from the case-papers shows that although the majority of parents could sign their names, few found letter-writing easy. Parr's research reveals that a surprising number of emigrant children did manage to keep in touch with their relatives, and a significant proportion succeeded in returning to Britain, but most individual families must have perceived an impending emigration as an enormous obstacle to a continuing relationship (18). Thus it is not, perhaps, surprising to find that by far the commonest reason for the failure of emigration plans was the refusal of parents and children to give their consent; 68% of would-be emigrants stayed in England because consent could not be obtained for their departure.

If the executive held scruples about the ethics of allowing children to emigrate without their parents' permission, many of the Society's agents had little compunction as to the means by which consent might be reached. A number were prepared to use every means at their disposal to persuade relatives to drop what they saw as misguided opposition to an unprecedented opportunity. All those who withheld consent were told they were selfishly denying their child the chance of a better life; those who were destitute might be informed that emigration was the only option unless they were prepared to resume care of a child whom they were patently unable to support. William H.'s case has been mentioned in an earlier chapter. He was an illegitimate child whose mother had died. His grandparents, who were in receipt of poor relief, were willing for him to

enter the Society's care, as they were unable to provide a home for him themselves. They were probably the tenants of Lady Mitford, who agreed to pay for William's support. Four years after his admission, when William was twelve, Lady Mitford suggested that he might be sent to Canada. William was eager to go, and the superintendent of his home, the Rev Izat, while expressing some concern about his health, considered that he would be suitable for emigration. However his grandparents adamantly refused to give their consent. Pressure was brought on them by their local vicar, and by Lady Mitford. William wrote to them to say 'he very much wished to go to Canada'. They were interviewed by Rev. Izat, and it also appears that their son-in-law and other relatives were drawn into the argument. From the comments made about them in letters to Rudolf it seems likely that they were told that their resistance was ignorant and ungrateful; their refusal to listen to any advice was considered to be unreasonably ruining William's prospects. Eventually legal advice was sought, and an attempt was made to persuade them that, because William was illegitimate, they had no legal rights over him. They still refused to agree to his departure. They were told that William's subsequent transfer to the Standon Home was because he had grown too old for the Rev. Izat's home at Balscote, but in fact the placement was arranged in order to allow him to train for Canada. However, a year later, when they were once again approached with a request for their consent to his emigration, they again refused, and he remained in England (19).

William H.'s case-papers are not the only ones to reveal enormous pressure placed on relatives to agree to plans for emigration. The

Society's agents occasionally tried to impress recalcitrant relatives with 'pseudo-legal' arguments as to why they should concede. When Mary C.'s father withdrew the consent which he had given on her admission to the Society, an attempt was made to bluff him with the spurious threat of legal action to bind him to his initial agreement to let her sail (20). Perhaps the most serious attempt to bluff a parent into an unwilling agreement was made in the case of Herbert and Gilbert C. Their mother was a widow who had given birth to an illegitimate child. They were admitted to the Society as free cases so that she could take a situation in service and retrieve her character. After seven years, emigration was considered as a means of reducing the Society's expenses, and a Mrs Bulley, who had originally referred the case, was sent to investigate. She reported that she had been unable to persuade the boys' mother to give her consent. Mrs C. had recently married a skilled bricklayer who was willing to offer the boys a formal apprenticeship. Although their home was extremely poor, they both requested that the children be discharged rather than sent abroad. Rudolf would have been willing to send the children home, but Mrs Bulley objected to this scheme because the stepfather had only recently given up drinking. She was also under pressure from her sister, who ran a small private home which had taken in two of the other children in the family, to insist that the mother agreed to emigration. Finally she suggested that the Waifs and Strays drew up a formal contract whereby the Society would offer to keep the children for a further year on condition that the mother promised that if, at the expiration of that period, her home was not considered suitable for them, she would raise no further objection to

their emigration. Such a contract did nothing to reassure the boys' mother, who foresaw any number of reasons why she might later be held to a promise which she could not retract; she insisted on an immediate discharge, the grandmother agreeing to keep the boys for a few weeks until she could provide a home for them (21).

It was not only relations who objected to emigration. Canada was presented to the children as a wonderful opportunity which they would be foolish to pass by. Recent research suggests that many children who emigrated from a variety of voluntary homes were persuaded that they were going to a rural idyll, and had no warnings of the realities of life on an isolated farm in a harsh climate (22). There is no reason to believe that Waifs and Strays children were given any more realistic information about life in Canada, but nevertheless, a small number refused to be tempted by the golden opportunity being offered them, and would not agree to go.

William F., who had no known relations, and was therefore asked, at the age of fourteen, to sign his own consent form, refused to do so, in spite of the fact that 'having had a year's practical work under a shepherd (he) would appear a very suitable case'. He was eventually sent to train with the House Boys' Brigade (23). Other children recognised that in Canada they would have little hope of being reunited with the relatives to whom they obstinately clung, in spite of concerted attempts to denigrate them. John L.'s mother bore 'a most notorious character, keeping a sort of open house for young men in the evenings': she had produced at least four illegitimate children since her husband died, and was, apparently, shunned by the community in which she lived. Her two elder legitimate children

had only obtained situations 'on condition of holding no intercourse of any kind with their mother'; before he was admitted to the Society, John had encountered similar difficulties. Since then his mother had been turned out of her cottage on account of her immorality. John was accepted by the Society with a view to emigration, and his mother signed the formal consent form before his admission. A Miss Young, who referred the case, agreed to pay his full expenses until he went abroad. However, it became increasingly obvious that he had no wish to go to Canada; in fact the staff of the home were afraid that he would run away rather than risk being sent. He was fortunate in that his sponsor realised the extent of his distress, and agreed to continue to support him until he was able to find a job in England. In spite of what appears to have been a fairly aggressive campaign to awaken him to his mother's shortcomings, he continued to be 'very fond of her' and eventually succeeded in obtaining permission to spend a fortnight's holiday with her (24). In a similar case, Emily W., whose emigration was planned in order to allow her to escape from 'worthless' parents who were allegedly intending to live on her earnings, insisted on going back to them when they refused to consent to her departure (25). The above two cases support a point made by Parr, that children's objections to severance were by no means confined to those whose relatives were considered to be respectable (26).

It must have taken considerable courage for both relatives and children to withstand a concerted campaign to persuade them to agree to emigration (27). Although persuasion was rarely accompanied by threats, those who

exerted pressure were generally in a position of authority over the people whom they attempted to influence. Thus they were the relatives' landlords, employers, or spiritual advisers: they were the children's supervisors or sponsors. They generally received the deference they expected, and it must have been difficult for both parties to come to terms with unaccustomed intransigence.

Not all those relatives who initially refused their consent to emigration succeeded in maintaining their position. A number succumbed to the pressure to capitulate. Thus Rebecca and Lily C.'s father withdrew his initial objections when he was told that, in his case, the Society would only accept his children if he allowed them to sail (28). Agreements that had been extracted from unwilling parents could scarcely be relied on, and it is clear that departures were sometimes hastily planned in order to lessen the chances of a retraction. Susan L.'s father originally refused to agree to her emigration, saying that if she went to Canada 'he would go too and work his passage out'. When the vicar's wife finally persuaded him to sign the form, efforts were made to dispatch Susan with precipitate speed in the hope that she might have left the country before he changed his mind (29). Similarly Matthew and Harry P. were not allowed a last visit to their father's home before they sailed in case he withdrew his consent (30). Altogether, about 12% of Waifs and Strays emigrants left the country precipitately in order to present vacillating parents with a fait accompli.

Relatives who unwillingly consented to a proposed emigration can scarcely be described as having wholeheartedly agreed to the Society's

plans. Nevertheless, Rudolf's insistence that they should be consulted gave them at least the opportunity of vetoing the move. Only a very few were not allowed such a chance: within the sample there was only one child whose relatives were, perhaps deliberately, kept ignorant of plans for their departure. James W. was one of six illegitimate children, and had been referred to the Society by a Miss Irwin, who described his mother as a 'bad disreputable woman' on account of her promiscuity. When his mother began to default on her payments, her responsibilities were taken over by the Cheshire fund; a year later the question of his emigration was raised. Miss Irwin, who had subscribed £1 a year to the Society and paid for his clothes, signed the emigration consent form, fallaciously describing herself as James' 'guardian'. Because his mother was considered to be 'a thoroughly abandoned woman', no attempt appears to have been made to contact her, either when she began to default on her payments, or when James' emigration was being planned (31).

The case-papers do not say whether James was still in contact with his mother at the time of his emigration. It seems likely that his relationship with his family was by then tenuous, if it existed at all: it was ten years before the Society received a letter from his brother asking whether he was still in the Chester home. It would thus be an exaggeration to argue that in his case the Waifs and Strays followed the example set by some of the other voluntary children's organisations, and used emigration as a form of 'philanthropic abduction' in order to destroy a close relationship with a relative who would undoubtedly have objected to a child's departure. No child in the Waifs and Strays sample

was clearly sent abroad under these circumstances.

There was only one other case to which such a motive might be ascribed. Rosina W. was the youngest sister of a sample child, and thus her circumstances are not, strictly speaking, within the scope of this study. Mary Ann W., the sample child, was cared for by the Society for over six years, but then failed to hold down a job and began to mix with 'bad companions'. She visited Rosina at the Croydon home, and was believed to have an undesirable influence over her. Rosina had already been removed from a previous home in order to escape the attentions of another sister, Alice, who was believed to be a prostitute. When Mary Ann's attentions became a cause for concern, Rosina was sent to Canada in order to avoid her, although she was known to have respectable relations in England who were willing to help her (32).

These cases are rarities. As a rule, relatives' opinions were sought and acted upon, even when the Society was under no apparent obligation to take them into account. George R.'s father was no longer his legal guardian, a fit person order having been made in favour of the NSPCC. Nevertheless, he was still asked to give his formal consent before his son was allowed to sail (33). As has previously been noted, some members of the Society criticised Rudolf for giving too much weight to the opinions of relatives, particularly when they were not the children's parents.

To an extent these criticisms were well-founded, for the integrity which insisted that relatives' views should be taken into consideration prevented the Waifs and Strays from emigrating more than a tiny minority of its children. The majority of those who did sail had no close relatives

who should have been consulted. Thus of the forty-four children in the sample who were sent to Canada, twenty-nine (67%) had lost touch with both parents through death or desertion prior to their admission to the Society; four more were no longer in contact with a parent by the time emigration was agreed. There is little evidence that the Society made strenuous efforts to trace these relatives in order to gain their formal consent: Nicholas J.'s mother, for instance, had 'gone off on the tramp with another man', and it was considered wisest not to try to trace her. His grandmother, however, signed the consent form in her place (34). In other instances, where parents had absconded after defaulting on their maintenance contributions, earlier attempts to find them had proved fruitless (35). Parental consents were obtained for the emigration of eight of the remaining ten children; no agreement was necessary in the case of one other, Clara M., who was twenty-four years old when she sailed (36). Only James W. (above) had a mother who could have been consulted, and was ignored.

Restricted access

Emigration was acknowledged as being the most efficient means of severing a link with undesirable relatives, but it was by no means the only possibility. The voluntary societies had the power, though probably not the right, to regulate unwelcome contacts further by concealing a child's address, by refusing permission to visit, and by withholding letters. These actions were, strictly speaking, ultra vires, for parents who requested a child's admission nevertheless retained legal custody; if

access was persistently denied they could, as a last resort, issue a writ of habeas corpus, and demand that the child's whereabouts be revealed. Nevertheless, many of the major voluntary societies openly restricted family contacts, particularly where the influence of relatives was believed to be detrimental to the child's careful training. These restrictions not only appear as part of the organisations' advertised policies; internal evidence from case-papers proves that they operated in practice. The obstacles that Barnardo placed in the way of parental access to boarded-out children have already been mentioned (see above, p.66). His organisation is also known to have had little compunction in concealing children's addresses and intercepting letters. (37). C.A.Stein limited the flow of letters by regulating the purchase of stamps, so that children who entered his House Boys' Brigade could not write home without his surveillance (38). Boards of guardians advertised the names of children who were about to be either boarded out or emigrated so that relatives might have a last chance of reclaiming them before contact was lost: it was accepted practice for voluntary boarding-out committees to conceal from interested relatives the addresses of children who had been placed in foster homes (39). In 1884 the Aston Union Boarding-Out Committee was severely criticised because relatives had not been told the address of a child who died (40).

By and large, the Waifs and Strays executive placed fewer formal restrictions on family contacts than did some of its rivals. Most of the homes allowed visitors once a month. At least some of the children appear to have spent short holiday periods with their relatives at some stage

during their years in the Society's care (41). Children were allowed to write and receive letters, and these were not automatically censored. It appears to have been only when relatives threatened to discharge a child prematurely or to disrupt plans for an adoption that exceptional restrictions were imposed. There were in fact, only three children in the Waifs and Strays sample whose whereabouts were clearly and deliberately withheld from interested relatives: the case of Alice S., who was placed for adoption against her brother's wishes, has already been discussed (42). The other two instances concerned children who were abruptly transferred from the Hull home when relatives raised the possibility of reclaiming them from the Society's care. Prior to these requests there had been no question of severing contacts.

Jane N.'s father had attempted to move her to a Roman Catholic home. When he finally agreed to let her stay under the protection of the Waifs and Strays, the supervisor of the Hull home in which she had been placed, suggested that she might be moved to a less accessible location. This did not happen immediately, but when she eventually did move to Newark, her relatives were not given a forwarding address. They nevertheless succeeded in contacting her there, and she was precipitately moved again, to a situation in Croydon, chosen because its distance from Hull might discourage her importunate relatives. She was sacked from this job, and given further training at Miss Ralfs' home for servants in Preston. Miss Ralfs had strong views as to the damage caused by contacts with relatives. She requested (and received) permission to interfere with Jane's letters, claiming that : 'they do write such a lot of rubbish, and,

generally speaking, mostly invented, and I am sure it is bad for the girls to read and receive such nonsense (43).' This latter move appears to have had the desired effect, for there is no evidence of further contact between Jane and her family; she spent two further years in domestic service at a safe distance from Hull before, at about the age of nineteen, leaving to marry 'very respectably' (44).

Matilda M. and her sister Sarah had spent over six years in the Hull home when a married sister, Margaret G. , wrote to ask if Matilda could be discharged to her care. Margaret had made the trip from Leeds to Hull to visit her sisters on several occasions, and the supervisor of the home considered that: 'judging from appearances she does not seem at all a fit person to bring up a young girl' (45). The Waifs and Strays had established a close link with the Leeds branch of the Charity Organisation Society, who were asked to make some inquiries. Their agent reported that, although Mr and Mrs G. claimed to run a second hand furniture business, it was obvious from the position of their shop that this was merely a front for a brothel. On this somewhat flimsy evidence it was considered necessary to break off all further contact with the girls' relatives. Emigration was considered, but rejected on the grounds that there was little possibility of obtaining consents; instead ,the girls were quickly and secretly moved to the Society's home in Fareham. Subsequent letters from both Margaret G. and another sister, Agnes M., appear to have been either returned or ignored. The superintendent of the Fareham home undertook responsibility to 'do our utmost to prevent the relatives from obtaining news as to the girls' whereabouts' (46).

It is unlikely to be coincidental that both these cases came from the Hull home. This had originally belonged to the local branch of the Society for the Protection of Friendless Girls; it was not transferred to the Waifs and Strays until 1892, and it seems probable that it retained the emphasis on rescue which characterised its founding society. Although individual members of staff in some of the Society's other homes were suspicious of parents' motives, such views do not appear to have been universally entertained (47). Generally speaking, it was rare for children to be transferred to avoid their parents' unwelcome attentions: the case-papers indicate why children left 570 different placements: only five (less than 1%) broke down because of interference from parents.

One could argue that Rudolf's reluctance to conceal children from the unwelcome attentions of their more disreputable relatives stemmed from the integrity which has been noted earlier. However, there were also good pragmatic reasons which discouraged him from adopting some of the more draconian policies publicised by other societies. An overt determination to sever unsavoury contacts could easily misfire. None of the importunate relatives described above were unmoved at the sudden disappearance of a child: their reaction to the abrupt curtailment of access could be vociferous. Some of them called upon the assistance of outside agencies to support their claims of respectability. Matilda M.'s sister, for instance, persuaded the agent for the Leeds D. P. (?Discharged Prisoners') Aid Society to write to Rudolf with a testimonial when it became apparent that her letters would not be answered (48). By enlisting support, she placed the Society at risk of incurring damaging publicity. There was always the

chance that an influential outside agency would take up a case and subject the Waifs and Strays to the expense and publicity of answering to a writ of habeas corpus. It was not only unwise to run such a risk, it was also unnecessary: formal restrictions on contacts with undesirable relatives were rarely required, for the same objectives could generally be achieved informally, and without incurring suspicion, by simply placing the child out of reach.

Distance

The least contentious method of weakening a child's links with relatives was to place him in a home that they would find inaccessible. It is unlikely that any of the children's old associates would have had access to private transport. Travel by train was relatively cheap within London, but even the third class fares of a penny a mile rendered the cost of a long journey from one part of the country to another, prohibitive to most low-income families. Those who did make use of the railways bought cheap day excursion tickets, which limited their travel to certain days of the year (mostly Bank Holidays) (49). Although some of the children's relatives could have reached their nearest town by carrier, the route used by this service was long and circuitous (50). The majority of relatives would therefore have been most accustomed to travelling by foot. In the late nineteenth century, Saturdays were working days for most people: few members of the workforce had more than one day off per week. Domestic servants and agricultural labourers often had only a few hours free time (51). Thus parents could not make regular visits unless

their children were placed near enough for them to be able to travel to and from the placement in one day. A very generous estimate would suggest that, for placements outside London, any distance of more than ten miles would be a serious obstacle to regular visiting. Within London, the suburban and the underground railway systems increased the opportunities for cheap and efficient travel, and I have estimated the maximum distance at which relatives might be expected to make regular visits as twenty miles. Thus an effective method of severing the childrens' relationship with their former associates was simply to place them over ten (or in London twenty) miles from their original address.

Some of the Waifs and Strays homes were placed in the depths of the country, and would have been difficult, in any case, to reach by public transport. When, for instance, the Standon home held an open day, arrangements were made for trains to make an unscheduled stop, so that distinguished visitors would have an easier journey (52). Parents would normally have had to travel to the nearest station and then probably walk the miles to the home. Other homes such as the Marylebone home, London and the Beckett home, Leeds were in large towns, and thus easier to reach. However, if the child was placed more than ten miles from his original address it would not have mattered how accessible the home was, or how frequently visitors were allowed, visits would have been a major undertaking, and only the most determined relatives would have persisted.

All those who sought admission for a child to the Waifs and Strays were required to agree to 'commit it wholly to the care of the managers of the

Home, to obey the rules in force and to permit the said child, when fully trained to be sent to any situation in the United Kingdom which may be obtained for it by the committee'(53). As Chapter 7 has shown, while 31% of parents objected to emigration, only 8% expressed reservations about this clause. Yet consent to this clause appears to have been taken as giving the Society carte blanche over placement policy within the United Kingdom.

When Rudolf gave evidence to the Mundella Committee on Poor Law Schools he was asked whether:

with regard to the difficult cases, where you wish parents not to get hold of the children, you find it necessary to send them to some distance from where the parent was last living?

To which he replied:

We do that in nearly all the cases where the children come from bad surroundings. For instance, a London child, whose surroundings are notoriously bad, we should probably send to Swansea, Newcastle or Carnarvon; but children whose parents are simply overburdened widows, we keep near their parents (54).

Horsley's evidence to the same committee reiterated this point (55).

The evidence from the case-papers does indeed corroborate the existence of a placement policy that distinguished between rescued and destitute children. The 400 children in the sample passed through a total of 684 different placements during their stay with the Society. Only 38 children experienced more than three placements while under the Society's care. Table 10.2 demonstrates how many of these first three placements were over ten (or in London, twenty) miles from the child's original address. While only 20% of rescued children were first placed within reach

TABLE 10.2

DISTANCE OF PLACEMENTS FROM CHILDREN'S ADDRESSES AT ADMISSION
(Waifs and Strays sample data 1887-1894:386 cases)

DISTANCE FROM ORIGINAL ADDRESS
(All children: N=382)

<u>PLACEMENT</u>	<u>UNDER TEN MILES*</u>		<u>OVER TEN MILES*</u>	
	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
First placement	110	28.8	272	71.2
Second placement	28	18.5	123	81.5
Third placement	17	24.6	52	75.4

DISTANCE FROM ORIGINAL ADDRESS
(Children of respectable widows N=51)

<u>PLACEMENT</u>	<u>UNDER TEN MILES*</u>		<u>OVER TEN MILES*</u>	
	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
First placement	14	27.5	37	72.5
Second placement	5	29.4	12	70.6
Third placement	1	20.0	4	80.0

DISTANCE FROM ORIGINAL ADDRESS
(Rescued children N=104)

<u>PLACEMENT</u>	<u>UNDER TEN MILES*</u>		<u>OVER TEN MILES*</u>	
	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
First placement	21	20.2	83	79.8
Second placement	6	11.8	45	88.2
Third placement	3	15.0	17	85.0

*Twenty miles if the original address was in London

of their families, 28% of the children of respectable widows were within ten miles of home. Only very few case-papers contained notes proving that a child had been deliberately placed out of reach of home, but of these, ten (71%) concerned rescued or committed children, and none were the children of respectable widows.

Although it does, therefore, appear that the executive made greater efforts to sever family links when children were considered to have been at risk of abuse, it is, perhaps, of more significance to note that the numbers of children placed near their parents were always very small, and that, within the sample as a whole, between 70 and 80% of all placements were effectively out of parental reach. The structure of the Society may have contributed to this, for few dioceses had more than one or two residential homes, and thus 'locally' placed children could still be several miles from their parents' address. However, 69% of boarded-out children were placed over ten miles from their parents, although there was apparently no shortage of foster homes. Whatever their antecedents, the majority of children were placed at such a distance from their original addresses that relatives were deterred from visiting except on extremely rare occasions.

Siblings

About 25% of the children who came into the Society's care were accompanied by one or more full siblings. (Step and half-siblings were extremely rare, probably on account of their differently structured kin networks). Modern accounts of the Society's work give the impression that

the separation of siblings was regarded as an inevitable consequence of admission, and that little attempt was made to preserve their relationship (56). However, the evidence from the case-papers suggests otherwise. Table 10.3 shows how the placement policy towards siblings was almost the exact opposite of that towards parents. Eighty per cent of children who had a sibling in the Society's care were placed within ten miles of them; as many as 72% shared the same first placement. Even when siblings were moved, they often accompanied one another to a new placement. Twenty-two (54%) sibling pairs shared two, and six (35%) shared three consecutive placements before separation. On average, siblings spent two and a half years in the Society's care before separation; about a third of sibling pairs remained together in the same placement until one member was old enough to be discharged to employment.

A carefully thought out severance policy would have removed children from all their former associates, allowing them to make a clean break with their past. Although it may have been Waifs and Strays' policy to place children at a distance from their parents, considerable efforts appear to have been made to compensate for the experience of separation by placing siblings within reach of one another. Ironically, this tended to negate the attempt to sever a child's links with home, for continued contact with siblings can hardly have failed to reinforce the old loyalties which separation was intended to destroy. Children who were placed with or near a sibling were more likely to remain in contact with a parent; they were also likely to develop exceptionally close links with

TABLE 10.3

PLACEMENTS OF SIBLINGS
(Waifs and Strays sample data 1887-1894 : 102 cases)

<u>FIRST PLACEMENTS OF SAMPLE CHILDREN</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Sibling placed in same home	68	72.3
Sibling placed within ten miles	7	7.5
Sibling placed further than ten miles away	19	20.2
TOTAL		94
Not known		8
TOTAL		100.0

<u>SECOND PLACEMENTS OF SAMPLE CHILDREN</u>		
Sibling placed in same home	22	53.7
Sibling placed within ten miles	6	14.6
Sibling placed further than ten miles away	13	31.7
TOTAL		41
Not applicable/Not known		61
TOTAL		100.0

<u>THIRD PLACEMENTS OF SAMPLE CHILDREN</u>		
Sibling placed in same home	6	35.3
Sibling placed within ten miles	0	0.0
Sibling placed further than ten miles away	11	64.7
TOTAL		17
Not applicable/Not known		85
TOTAL		100.0

one another. There is, of course, no way of determining whether the links between siblings who had been separated from their parents were closer than those between children who had grown up in an intact family; there is, however, some evidence from the case-papers to suggest that a number of siblings who had been placed together within the Society shared the same home in adulthood (57).

Sometimes an intention to encourage sibling relationships was spelled out on the case-papers. Thus Thomas S. was placed in a foster home in Wanstead so that he could attend the same school as his brother, with the object that 'by constantly seeing each other they may not lose their affection one for another' (58). When Ernest and John W. were admitted to the Society's care, no attempt appears to have been made to meet a request to place them near their grandmother, but considerable efforts were made to reunite the children after an initial, unavoidable separation (59). The often painstaking exertions that were taken to preserve sibling relationships recognised that brothers and sisters who had been through a number of unfortunate experiences together often needed to cling to one another, perhaps seeing in their relationship a symbolic link with a home that no longer existed.

The strength of attachment that could (and still can) exist between traumatised siblings is further demonstrated by the presence of several orphaned families within the sample, who were held together by the exertions of an older brother or sister (60). Annie Y. was one of several sisters who demonstrated that this popular theme in Victorian literature had its basis in reality. She was nineteen when her

stepfather murdered her mother. She persuaded her employer to provide a temporary home for her three younger siblings who appear to have been disowned by their other relatives. When they were received into the Society's care she had to agree to the older boy, Robert's, emigration, as she could not support him, but she kept in touch with him, and proceeded to exert herself on behalf of her younger siblings. James and Maud were placed in foster homes in the same village until the former was abruptly removed following his 'contamination by an immoral servant'. Annie was by now able to support him (she may have married), and she rejected the Society's plan that he be moved to a distant residential home, insisting instead on his being discharged to her care. Five years later she refused to allow the Society to move her half-sister, Maud, from a stable foster home to a residential home where she would be trained for service. Instead she arranged to take over Maud's maintenance, and pay for her privately so that she could remain with her foster mother (61).

It will be noted that not all the members of this family stayed together. Before Annie was old enough to support him, Robert emigrated to Canada. There were a number of other sibling groups for whom little attempt was made to promote contacts. Those who entered the Society on different dates often failed to be reunited; indeed the method of cataloguing case-papers contained no means of tracing relationships, many of which appear to have passed unnoticed. The policy of providing residential care in single-sex homes meant that some brothers and sisters were separated, but by no means all. While nearly three quarters (72%) of the same-sex sibling pairs shared a placement at some stage, over half

(55%) of mixed-sex pairs were also placed together. Siblings who were placed apart often did lose touch with one another. A few appeared in adulthood to be unaware of one another's existence (62).

Although a number of siblings lost touch through default, there were, however, very few who were deliberately kept apart. Those few who were intentionally separated were kept apart for all the reasons that children were deliberately kept away from their parents. Thus Rosina W. was sent to Canada in order to avoid the influence of an elder sister who had gone to the bad after leaving the Society's care (63). An attempt was made to sever the link between Alice S. and her sister in order to allow the former to be transplanted by adoption into a superior social class (64). When the C. family came into the society's care, the baby, Ethel, was 'adopted' by a Miss Noble who placed her with a foster mother near to her home, and undertook to maintain her and supervise her upbringing. After one, unsuccessful, attempt, contact with her siblings was discouraged (65).

Nevertheless, 70% of siblings definitely remained in touch with one another, and most of these contacts were actively promoted by the Society. The unevenness of the policies towards siblings emphasises the ambivalence felt towards severance, a policy which was strongly advocated in theory, but only tentatively embraced in practice. Further evidence of this ambivalence can be seen in the Society's dealings with parents who requested a premature discharge.

Premature Discharge

The training offered by the voluntary societies was intended to enable children to overcome the moral, spiritual and financial disadvantages of their early environments. To be really effective, it had to be inculcated throughout childhood and beyond. Parents who had voluntarily requested admission retained the right, but often not the power, to reclaim their children at any time. Premature discharge was usually resisted because parents were likely to devalue the children's training and 'drag them down to their own level' once more; many of the manoeuvres intended to weaken a child's links with his previous associates were undertaken in order to lessen the likelihood of this happening.

The Waifs and Strays Society made it plain that children who entered its care were expected to remain there at least until they reached fourteen, and preferably for several more months, until they were established in a steady job. At least one relative was told erroneously that it was illegal for her to remove a child from employment found by the Society before she reached the age of sixteen (66). Close links with the Girls Friendly Society, which offered financial prizes to young servants who remained with the same employer, further encouraged many of the girls, at least, to stay in the jobs found for them by the Society, however distant they were from family and friends. Thus the link with the Waifs and Strays was reinforced into adulthood, at the expense of the young person's ties with her original family.

In spite of their initial concurrence with the Society's avowed aim to protect and train their children until they reached adulthood, about

one in six (17%) families tried to engineer a premature discharge. Relatives asked for a child's return for a variety of reasons, which have been set out in Table 10.4. Certain changes of circumstances such as recovery from illness, or (re-)marriage, sometimes enabled parents to resume the care of a child from whom they had previously been separated. It must by now be clear, however, that admission was not simply regarded as a holding operation to provide the child with a home until his parents were able to resume care. Thus a change in the circumstances that had originally led to the request for admission did not invariably lead to an early discharge. Indeed, less than half the number of parents whose circumstances are known to have improved, were quickly reunited with their children (44%;n=48).

The commonest change of circumstances was the marriage or re-marriage of a parent, but in only about half the cases in which this occurred, did it result in a child's discharge. The appalling financial struggle faced by most lone mothers encouraged many widows to re-marry with precipitate haste, often to the ultimate disadvantage of themselves and their children. Several of them married men who were unable to support them, and thus found that they were still too poor to reclaim their children (67). Many found their husbands were alcoholics, who abused them and their children: Edward H.'s mother, for instance, was 'a most respectable woman', but he was not discharged when her circumstances improved, as she 'was fool enough to marry' a man who was described as 'a brute', who ill-treated her and her children. He eventually served three months hard labour for cruelty (68). Similarly, six of the parents who

TABLE 10.4

PREMATURE DISCHARGE: REASONS FOR REQUESTS FROM RELATIVES
(Waifs and Strays sample data: 68 cases)

<u>REASON FOR REQUEST</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
CHANGE IN RELATIVES' CIRCUMSTANCES:		
(Re)marriage	8	15.7
Now able to support child	7	13.7
No longer able to pay agreed maintenance	3	5.9
Child now old enough to contribute to family income	5	9.8
CHANGE IN CHILD'S CIRCUMSTANCES:		
Child unhappy/Relatives dissatisfied	14	27.4
Child about to be transferred/emigrated	6	11.8
Request for removal to another voluntary home	3	5.9
Other	5	9.8
TOTAL		51
Not known		17
		100.0

reappeared after deserting their children were regarded as 'worthless' and were discouraged from resuming care (69).

Changes in parents' circumstances accounted for less than half of the requests for early discharge. The greatest number arose either because of actual changes in the care provided, or through an alteration in the parents' perceptions of the treatment received. The relationship between relatives and the Society rested to a considerable degree upon trust: the Society had to feel sure that parents would not interfere unnecessarily with its work, and parents had to feel confident that they would be dealt with straightforwardly. Once either party suspected the other of undermining their authority, the relationship foundered. I have already shown how the Society tended to react to attempts by relatives to undermine their work by concealing addresses, or by peremptory emigration. In some cases parents became suspicious that the Waifs and Strays' agents were deliberately undermining their relationship with a child. Elizabeth H. was originally placed in St Nicholas Home in Tooting, within easy reach of her widowed mother. She was considered to be too lame for domestic service, and so was sent to St Chad's home in Leeds to learn machine knitting. Her mother was not consulted about this move, and only heard of it after Elizabeth had been transferred. She wrote several letters complaining that Leeds was too far away for her to visit, and that she had had no opportunity to see her daughter before she left London. Finally, she insisted on her discharge. It is unlikely that Elizabeth was, in fact, moved for any other reason than to provide her with better training: all young girls in the care of the Waifs and Strays

whose physical handicaps disqualified them from domestic service, were sent to St Chad's. However, by failing to consult her mother, the Society laid itself open to the suspicion that there was an ulterior motive to the move, and the confidence which formed the basis of the relationship, was shattered (70).

There is no way of discovering how many parents were aware of the accounts of philanthropic abduction that appeared in the publicity material of some of the voluntary societies, or the restrictive legislation that was passing through the courts (71). Nevertheless, it is clear that many were nervous lest the Society attempted to overreach its powers, and prevented them from reclaiming their children. Six children were removed when relatives heard of plans to send them to distant or inaccessible placements. Three others were abruptly reclaimed when relatives grew frightened that they were about to be peremptorily emigrated. The almost total lack of evidence to corroborate suspicions that the Society's agents deliberately tried to mislead some parents is immaterial: once relatives ceased to trust that they were being dealt with straightforwardly, their relationship with the Waifs and Strays foundered, and they applied for an early discharge (72).

The large number of requests for discharge on the grounds that the child was unhappy or receiving inadequate care, further demonstrates how greatly the Society depended upon parents' readiness to trust its agents. Although some children were clearly ill-treated by foster parents and residential workers, others appear to have been removed because relatives stopped believing that the Society could provide superior care. John D.'s

grandparents removed him from his foster home six months after his brother had died there of Bright's disease. They appear to have been financially solvent, being the only relatives who were able to provide a banker's reference, yet they refused to settle arrears of maintenance on the grounds of their 'dissatisfaction with the treatment which the children received at the hands of the society' (73).

As children grew older, it grew increasingly difficult to maintain mutual trust between parents and the Society's representatives, for each held different assumptions as to the purpose of the intervention, and the gulf between their perspectives gradually became more apparent. Parents believed that they had been relieved of the burden of caring for children during their years of dependency: they therefore assumed that once they became wage-earners, young adolescents would return home, and help contribute to the family finances. However, almost all the members of the Waifs and Strays executive, the local secretaries and the staff of the homes saw themselves as offering a comprehensive training that was intended to distance children permanently from degraded or ineffectual relatives. Although it was official policy to release children at fourteen, to do so jeopardised their chances of capitalising on their training.

The executive responded to most requests from relatives who sought the return of a child, by requesting a character reference from their vicar or the local secretary for the area in which they lived. Just as the placement policy attempted to distinguish between children from 'respectable' and 'disreputable' homes, so was an attempt made to restrict

early discharge to children whose parents might be relied upon to reinforce the Society's training. Although widows and some other relatives of unquestionable respectability were allowed to reclaim adolescent children whose incomes might lift the family out of destitution, others who sought the discharge of a child for identical purposes were criticised for acting as parasites (74). The pronounced prejudice in favour of respectable relations could blind the executive to their faults. Margaret W., for instance, spent four years in the Society's care before, at fourteen, she was promptly discharged to an unknown but 'respectable' aunt whose searching inquiries as to her experience of housework made it clear that she would be exploited as an unpaid servant (75).

Table 10.5 gives the ages of the children who are known to have been reunited with their families; table 10.6 gives the categories at admission of the 36 children who returned home at their relative's request before reaching fourteen. It is not surprising to find that the majority were the children of respectable widows. Perhaps more unexpected is the finding that a number of abused and committed children were also discharged prematurely. Parents of committed children had the right to petition the court to rescind the order: Charlotte M. was committed to industrial school at the age of six on the grounds that her mother was a prostitute: two years later Mrs M. managed to persuade the Society's representative that she was now reformed, and an absolute discharge was, somewhat reluctantly, recommended as there were no longer grounds for committal. On hearing that Charlotte had returned home, the NSPCC inspector

TABLE 10.5

PREMATURE DISCHARGE: AGES OF ALL CHILDREN WHO RETURNED TO RELATIVES
 (Waifs and Strays sample data 1887-1894: 107 cases)

<u>AGE</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
0-4	7	6.5
5-9	17	15.9
10-13	31	29.0
14*	16	14.9
15 and over	36	33.7
TOTAL 107		100.0

*official age of discharge

TABLE 10.6

**PREMATURE DISCHARGE: CATEGORIES AT ADMISSION OF CHILDREN WHO RETURNED
 HOME AT THEIR RELATIVES' REQUEST BEFORE REACHING FOURTEEN**
 (Waifs and Strays sample data 1887-1894: 36 cases)

<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Orphan	1	2.8
Parent(s) physically unfit	3	8.3
Mother:widow with other young children	15	41.6
Illegitimate with striving mother	5	13.9
Neglected/illtreated/immoral influences	3	8.3
Parent in prison	0	0.0
Committed	1	2.8
<u>OTHER (DO NOT FIT RECOMMENDED CATEGORIES)</u>		
Admitted for training	0	0.0
Deserted	1	2.8
Parents separated, mother striving	4	11.1
Father:widower with other young children	2	5.6
Other	1	2.8
TOTAL 36		100.0

who had originally referred the case angrily reprimanded the Waifs and Strays for their gullibility. He claimed that her surroundings were, if anything, worse than before, but there is no evidence that she was re-committed (76). This is not the only case in which contemporary observers held opposing views as to a parent's supposed immorality: without objective proof, there was always the possibility that immorality lay as much in the perceptions of the (generally middle-class) social reformer as in the actions of the parent (77).

In cases where parents insisted on reclaiming children whom they had allowed to be brought up by third parties, the 1891 Custody of Children Act gave courts discretionary powers to order them to reimburse 'the whole of the costs properly incurred in bringing up the child, or such portion thereof as shall seem to the court to be just and reasonable, having regard to all the circumstances of the case' (78). Although both parents and the Waifs and Strays executive appear to have taken only a minimal number of cases to court, the Society did quite frequently place informal financial penalties on parents who reclaimed their children early.

Eleven of the parents who insisted on reclaiming their children prematurely were told they must repay the Society a portion of its expenses. The sums demanded were not large: parents were asked to reimburse train fares, or the cost of fitting a girl out for service. Several parents were denied the return of a child until they had paid up arrears of maintenance, the Society recognising that the chances of recovering a debt after discharge were minimal. Although individual

penalties were very small, they could appear insurmountable to families which had to count every penny. This was often intentional, for penalties were used as a means of warning off parents who tried to reclaim a child against the wishes of the Society's representatives. Their use as a deterrent was sometimes successful: when Mary C.'s father tried to withdraw her from the Society's care in order to prevent her emigration to Canada, he was told he could not reclaim her unless he paid her fare home from Nottingham to Exeter 'and that I know he cannot do'. He eventually agreed to allow her to remain with the Waifs and Strays as long as they let her stay in England (79). There appears to have been little coherent policy over demands for reimbursement: 'respectable' as well as 'disreputable' parents could all be penalised. However, the matrons and committees of residential homes tended to feel that their work was being criticised when children were allowed home early. Referrers, who were frequently given the job of checking on the current situation of a family, also felt that their judgment was being called into question, particularly if a child was allowed home against their recommendations. It is evident that a number of requests for discharge did result from a loss of confidence in the Society's care. In at least half the cases in which they were imposed, it seems probable that financial penalties were introduced as a means of punishing parents for their ingratitude.

A vivid example of this reaction can be found in the case-papers of Beatrice B., who wrote to ask her aunt to apply for her transfer as she was unhappy in the private training home for servants in which she had been placed by the Waifs and Strays. The home was run by Miss Ralfs,

whose disapproval of relatives' influence we have already encountered (see above p.338). Beatrice's mother was a prostitute, but her aunt was a respectable woman who had completely taken over the care of her brother, and had offered Beatrice as much assistance as she was able to before her admission. This point was apparently disregarded, and both Rudolf and Miss Ralfs strongly opposed her application for Beatrice's discharge to a situation which she had found near her home. Although the aunt eventually won the argument, she was made to reimburse Beatrice's train fare from London to Miss Ralfs' home in Blackpool, further travelling expenses incurred on her discharge from Blackpool home to Birmingham, and also the cost of her servant's uniform, altogether a sum of well over three pounds. This penalty was intended to be punitive, for Miss Ralfs wrote to Rudolf: 'I shall certainly want the money refunded that I paid for her journey, and you want the outfit, so this whim of theirs will cost them dear' (80).

Parents' and relatives' applications for discharge were not always successful. Under the 1891 Custody of Children Act it was also possible to answer a writ of habeas corpus with the assertion that the parent was unfit to resume care of the child (81). Although Rudolf claimed to discourage litigious parents by threatening to invoke this clause, this must have been a rare occurrence, for the case-papers provide no instances in which it happened in practice (82). Although the preceding argument has shown that he did, occasionally, sanction ultra vires actions designed to deny access to those whose influence was considered pernicious, only eleven (16%) relatives' applications for

premature discharge were denied.

Only three relatives refused access to their children, three addresses withheld, and emigration largely restricted to those who had no family ties to break : the proof of an active severance policy operated by the Waifs and Strays Society is, to say the least, tenuous. Even those relatives who were obliged to pay costs as compensation for premature discharge were charged only a fraction of the full reimbursement that the law allowed. The published material would suggest that the Society actively set out to break parental ties, particularly where relatives were believed to be unfit; the only indication that this may have been the case is to be seen in the discovery that rescued children were slightly more likely to be placed at a distance from their relatives than were those whose families were destitute. Even this finding loses significance beside the discovery that 70 to 80% of all children were placed out of parental reach.

We do not know whether the Waifs and Strays were alone in paying lip-service to a draconian policy which its practice belied. Parr's research suggests that Barnardo was far more willing than Rudolf to exceed his mandate (83). Evidence from the Waifs and Strays case-papers suggests that Rudolf was under considerable pressure from other organisations to deal more severely with particular families. Thus the condemnation of Matilda M.'s relations came from the Charity Organisation Society; the censure of Charlotte M.'s premature return home came from the NSPCC (84). When Beatrice B.'s aunt first requested her discharge, the district

secretary of the Vigilance Society informed the Waifs and Strays that: 'the Birmingham committee are prepared to fight the case tooth and nail, they have never lost a case yet, but..the child must be removed (i.e.transferred) before the mother gets hold of her'¹ (85). The sample yielded no case in which the converse was true, and Rudolf put pressure on the executive of another society to adopt a stricter approach. Further research is necessary before the practices of the Waifs and Strays can be accurately compared with those of other societies, but it does appear as though in their dealings with the children's families they adopted a less high-handed approach than did some of their contemporaries.

Perhaps the most interesting feature to emerge from this examination of the manner in which the children's contacts with their relatives were controlled, is not the weakness of the Waifs and Strays severance policy, but the strength of the attachment in some families. Children generally remained within the Society's care until they were considered independent: the average length of their stay was 43 months. During that time they had little contact with their families. Many parents found letter-writing difficult; they were discouraged from visiting their children by the obvious disapproval of a number of members of staff, and by the gulf between their own circumstances and the imposing appearance of some of the homes. While middle-class supporters were encouraged to inspect the homes at any time, including Christmas Day, parents were only allowed to visit on specific occasions, generally once a month (86). In any case, few had either the time or the resources to visit children whom they could not easily walk to see. Moreover, they were popularly considered to

have been only too happy to relinquish their responsibilities. Yet a surprising number of families went to considerable lengths to preserve a relationship with an absent child. They spent months saving up to buy an excursion ticket, and then travelled miles to make a short visit. They wrote painstaking and poorly spelt letters. They sent birthday cards, and often small gifts of carefully saved money. Thirty-two of the families became well-known to the staff of the children's homes; fifty-three are known to have visited on at least one occasion. Although the majority of children were never reunited with their families, for a substantial minority the relationship never lost its potency: in spite of all the efforts to establish new loyalties to a different life 107 children (27%) never broke the link with their past, and eventually returned home.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: CONCLUSIONS: THE CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCE

Contemporary observers rarely, if ever, appear to have questioned the much advertised ability of the voluntary societies to offer a far higher standard of care than that provided by the parents of the children concerned. Occasionally a scandal was reported in the press: in 1877, Miss Stride's Homes were condemned for transferring a child to the workhouse who turned out to be infected with lice, ringworm and whooping cough, while in 1879, children from Miss Addiscott's Home were apparently sent out into the streets to beg (1). However, such incidents appear largely to have been confined to the smaller, more precarious organisations; by and large it was assumed that the major rescue societies such as Dr Barnardo's, Dr Stephenson's Homes and the Waifs and Strays, offered enormous advantages to children who were lucky enough to be admitted, and that these would have been denied them had they remained at home. This final chapter seeks to assess the extent to which this was indeed the case; it asks firstly whether, while they were being looked after by the Society, the children received a better quality of care than their parents might have been able to provide, and secondly whether, on their discharge, they found that the experience had improved their prospects of employment.

Children in the Community

It is clear from innumerable official enquiries, from private surveys such as those of Rowntree and Booth, and from the admission papers of the

children themselves, that many of them had lived in appalling conditions before they were admitted to the Waifs and Strays (2). Chapter 6 has shown that most of the children came from families very similar to those described in detail by Rowntree and Booth: in fact, some of the families in Booth's house-to-house survey were found to have placed their children in the care of the voluntary societies (3). These researchers found numerous families living in houses that were unfit for human habitation, with leaking roofs and broken windows stuffed with rags. Many were infested with vermin. Bathrooms and indoor lavatories were virtually unknown; in the urban slums, outside closets would often contaminate the only supply of running water, both of which were shared between several families. Rowntree found as many as twenty families sharing a single tap (4). Their findings were confirmed by the evidence presented to enquiries such as the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes (1885) and the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws (1909) (5).

Although the worst conditions were most prevalent in the towns, Rowntree's later investigation of rural poverty makes it plain that the tied cottage of the agricultural labourer was often cold, dark and damp as well as being totally inadequate for the needs of a large family. The nearest water supply could be a contaminated well, situated as much as a quarter of a mile from the cottage. In fact, such homes 'might very often have been transplanted, singly or in rows, from some cheerless little street in a sordid city area' (6).

As well as being dirty, insanitary and dark, these houses were poorly ventilated; they were hot and stuffy in summer, and freezing cold in

winter. Fuel was expensive, especially when coal was bought piecemeal by the bag, and many families went to bed early in order to economise. Blankets and sheets, if they existed at all, were woefully inadequate; nightclothes are rarely mentioned in clothing budgets, and families often appear to have slept in their clothes, piling up their outdoor garments as extra bedding. It was common for adults and children to share a bedroom, and indeed a bed - a custom that scandalised middle-class observers, but which may have been necessary just to keep warm.

As has already been noted, even when the father was present, the average income of Waifs and Strays sample families was only 19s 5d. In his study of urban life, Rowntree calculated that the minimum weekly sum necessary to feed a child under the age of eight was 2s 1d: eight to sixteen year olds cost sixpence more. He printed detailed budgets for some of the families in his sample. Family No. 5, with a weekly wage of 20s for three adults and two children, had an income similar to that of many Waifs and Strays families with male breadwinners. They were spending 21% less on food than the absolute minimum calculated by Rowntree as necessary to maintain them 'in a state of bare physical efficiency'. In a family where the average weekly earnings were 17s 6d for two adults and five children, the expenditure on food was 43% less than the minimum. The situation was even worse than the above figures would suggest, for, as Rowntree pointed out, unavoidable shortfalls were exacerbated by ignorance about nutrition so that the inadequate sums available were rarely spent wisely. The detailed diets of fourteen families with earnings under 26s listed by

Rowntree were all deficient in protein and calories. Children in such families were particularly vulnerable: the breadwinner's ability to maintain his strength was recognised as crucial to the family's well-being, so that fathers were always given extra food at the expense of the rest of the family. Thus while the father in family No 1. had fish, meat and bacon for his main meals, his wife and children only had a little meat on Sundays, making do with pea soup or bread and dripping for the rest of the week (7).

Of course, many of the Waifs and Strays children had come from rural homes where one might have expected the diet to have been supplemented with bacon from the family pig, or vegetables from an allotment. Rowntree's study of rural life suggests that this would have been unlikely: the agricultural labourers whom he interviewed could rarely afford to buy a piglet to fatten up through the year. Moreover, their wives were more likely to take on casual employment which produced cash, than spend their spare time looking after pigs and hens. Most of the families did supplement their diet with the produce from their gardens and allotments, but these were largely given over to potatoes, which replaced bread as their staple diet for several months of the year. Although they did eat more fresh vegetables than the urban population appear to have consumed, this advantage was offset by particularly low wages, and their diet remained significantly deficient in protein. At least one family in his rural survey appeared literally to be starving (8).

An earlier chapter has shown how the average earnings of lone mothers of sample children, even when supplemented by outdoor relief, was only 8s

per week. They and their children fared even worse than the families whose budgets were analysed by Rowntree. Jack Lanigan describes how, in Salford in the 1890s, the rent absorbed the whole of his widowed mother's earnings, while he and his brother kept the family alive on left-overs begged from the miners' lunch-boxes, scrapings from the fish-and-chip shops, and charity soup (9). One contemporary observer wrote that:

a good many families lived on one meal per day - a loaf about six p.m. I found on one occasion that the dinner for eight on the Sunday was four pounds of potatoes, bought for one penny in the Caledonian Road. By questioning the children separately, I found that all they had with the potatoes was salt (10).

It is obvious that families which had too little money for food, had even less for clothing. Here again, the bulk of expenditure had to be devoted to the father, who needed to preserve a respectable appearance in order to gain employment. Consequently, his wife and children suffered disproportionately. Rowntree's accounts of family clothing budgets contain no provision for underclothes for twelve-year-old boys, about half of whom also 'did without' an overcoat. Boots and stockings were often the most expensive items of children's clothing, and the poorest might expect to go barefoot. Sacking could be the only protection for children's feet in winter. Moreover, as Rowntree pointed out, even those families who managed to maintain an outward appearance of respectability, wore clothing that was totally inadequate to withstand the cold.

Inevitably, the consequences of poor housing, insufficient food, and inadequate clothing had their effect on health: one in four babies born to families living in such conditions died without reaching their first birthday. In comparison, the infant mortality rate amongst

'servant-keeping' families was less than one in ten. Ill-health often had to be ignored if doctors' bills, special diets and medicines were beyond the patient's means. Rowntree found that more than half of the school children from the poorest families in York:

bore some mark of the hard conditions against which they were struggling. Puny and feeble bodies, dirty and often sadly insufficient clothing, sore eyes, in many cases acutely inflamed through continued want of attention, filthy heads, cases of hip disease, swollen glands - all these and other signs told the same tale of privation and neglect (11)

Dr Parsons, who investigated conditions in Scotland for the 1909 Poor Law Commission, found that 60% of children in receipt of outdoor relief were 5% or more below average weight, that 46% had badly decayed teeth, and that 14% were verminous (12).

Education and Employment

Children from such families, who were trying to survive on the brink of destitution, were often poor attenders at school, and they left at the earliest possible moment in order to contribute to the family income. From 1870 onwards, education was universally compulsory until a child reached the age of thirteen; the school leaving age was raised to fourteen in 1900 (13). However, local bye-laws enabled children aged ten and over, who had reached the required standard, either to leave school completely, or to attend on a half-time basis while they went out to work. It is difficult to discover how many children were given certificates of exemption, but in 1891, while 96% of the expected number of five to nine year olds 'of the class usually found in elementary schools' appeared on the school registers, only 57% of those aged between ten and thirteen

could be found there (14). Presumably most of those whose names had disappeared had left school to start work. In some localities, certificates of exemption from school attendance appear to have been awarded more according to the family's perceived needs than the child's level of attainment. Thus in Salford in 1900, Jack Lanigan was allowed to sit the school leaving examination at the age of ten, because he had no father (15).

Education interfered with the economics of survival; not only did large numbers of children leave school at the earliest possible moment in order to start work, those who remained in full-time education were frequently absent when they had an opportunity of contributing to the family income. Thus in rural districts attendance dropped sharply when extra labour was needed for seasonal work such as hay-making, turnip-pulling and sheep-shearing (16). Older girls were often kept at home to mind the house or look after younger siblings while their parents worked: until 1895 less than 70% of eligible children actually attended school on any given day. Many contemporary observers noted that fines for non-attendance were considerably less than the amount a child could earn when he should have been at school (17).

Half-time children spent part of the day at school, and part in factories, mines, and workshops. Like their adult colleagues, they could legally be restricted to receiving only six days holiday a year, but there were limitations on the number of hours that they could work. Half-time children could not be employed on Saturdays if on any other day in the week they had worked for more than five and a half hours (18).

There were, however, no restrictions on the number of hours which many other children in full-time education worked before and after school in occupations such as agriculture, domestic service, running errands or selling newspapers. Nearly 8% of children over the age of ten had jobs outside school, some of them working extremely long hours. In 1898 there were over 3,000 children who worked over 40 hours per week in addition to their full-time attendance at school (19). Jack Lanigan describes how, in the 1890s his brother, while still at school, worked as a lather-boy in a barber's shop from 5 p.m. until 9 p.m. Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. until 11 p.m. on Saturday, and 8 a.m. until 12 noon on Sunday for one shilling a week (20). It is not surprising that contemporary observers noted that many children were too tired to concentrate when they got to school; school-teachers often gave the half-timers, who had begun work at 6.00 a.m., undemanding tasks that they could complete while dozing (21).

Almost all the Waifs and Strays children came from families that were on the brink of destitution; they would almost undoubtedly have been among those whose attendance at school was irregular, and who left at the earliest possible opportunity in order to start contributing to the family income. Within their families there would have been no opportunity to wait for the right job to become available, or to undertake a lengthy training or apprenticeship. The type of jobs that could easily be found, such as running errands, or cleaning boots and knives in a middle-class home, were only appropriate for a few years, until they were claimed by younger contenders, who could be paid less; those who were forced to

accept the first dead-end job they were offered, rarely found the opportunity to develop the skills that would have enabled them to rise above the pool of unskilled, casual labour.

Thus in many respects children who entered the Waifs and Strays would previously have been accustomed to an extremely low level of care. At the time of their admission, they would have probably been ill-fed, ill-clothed and unhealthy. Many would have been verminous. Few would have been regular attenders at school, and even fewer would have been able to benefit from their education. On reaching adulthood their prospects of obtaining secure, adequately paid employment would have been poor. The remainder of this chapter examines how far their situation was improved by admission to the Society.

Care Within the Foster Homes

Although only about a third of the children came from the larger towns, the myth prevailed that all had been rescued from the urban slums. Thus it was recommended that they should be found wholesome foster homes in peaceful villages, where the fresh air and the isolation from their former associates would help them overcome their early experiences. Almost without exception, the Society's published material concurred with the widespread belief that foster homes provided the optimum form of care for separated children, particularly if they had been admitted at an early age (22).

The aim of the boarding-out system was to find substitute homes in

which separated children might become absorbed into the local community. It was assumed that foster parents would provide them with permanent substitute care, and would succeed in replacing the natural parents from whom they had been removed. As local secretaries, the 'parish ladies' who referred children to the Society, were also expected to find and supervise foster parents. Many of them regarded the placement of a foster child as an act of patronage which they could bestow as part of their work amongst the poor. Thus foster parents tended to be recruited from the 'respectable' part of communities similar to those which provided the children; they only rarely came from a much higher economic group than that to which the children's parents belonged. As Rowntree pointed out, rural poverty was at least as prevalent as urban destitution. Fostering was therefore often perceived as a reciprocal arrangement in which foster parents benefited as much from the boarding-out allowance as did the children from the provision of a home.

The reciprocal nature of the relationship was particularly clear if the foster parent was a widow. In 1884 'F.J.de C.' had written to the *Waifs and Strays* magazine, suggesting that if a widow had 'four or even six homeless children' boarded out with her at the usual rate, the money she received would enable her not only to look after them, but also to provide adequate care for her own family. The writer claimed:

I have been surprised at the number of widows in my neighbourhood whose children are almost as neglected as the motherless ones we wish to help; though I have talked the matter over with a great many people, no other solution of the difficulty has ever been suggested (23).

There is little evidence that the Society adopted these recommendations

wholeheartedly. Indeed, one wonders how it would have been possible to decide which widow should lose her children, and which should be made a foster parent. The Waifs and Strays' Boarding Out Regulations for 1886 expressly limited the number of children who could be placed with any one person, and prohibited local secretaries from placing children with prospective foster parents who were in receipt of poor relief (24). Nevertheless, the possibilities of forming a reciprocal relationship between child, foster parent and supervisor were undoubtedly seen as a major advantage of the boarding-out system: this was spelled out in a lengthy article which appeared in the magazine for 1888:

A little orphan, and another whose memories and experience of a parent is worse than orphanage, are boarded out with a widow who is motherly and respected, but on the brink of destitution and the workhouse. Cui bono? To the children who gain or regain a mother's care; to the foster parent who can now retain her home by the ten shillings she receives weekly from us for her maintenance and care of the children; to the lady, perhaps, who gains a fresh interest by her supervision, for us, of these children (25).

Some of the case-papers emphasise the virtues of such a relationship. Reciprocity was clearly a consideration in the agreement to place Evelyn F. with 'a respectable widow in the village' and in the offer of a foster child to Mrs F. another widow, when she lost her allowance on the death of her own son (26). Other case-papers suggest that the regulations were sometimes ignored: Abraham B. was placed in a home where the allowances from an excessive number of boarded-out children made up a large proportion of the total income. Florence W.'s foster mother was in receipt of poor relief for her own children; one of the reasons for her removal was that the school-teacher had accused her foster mother of keeping her

off school in order to help in the house (27).

The drawback lay in the economics of the relationship. The boarding-out allowance of between four and five shillings per week was intended to cover food, clothing, school fees and medical care for the foster child alone. It represented about a third of a farm labourer's pay, or two thirds of the amount a widow might receive through a mixture of casual earnings and poor relief. Some foster parents were so much in need of the extra income that they agreed to take in a child at a reduced fee (28). Although, judging by Rowntree's figures, the full allowance would in itself have been amply sufficient to cover the costs of keeping the child, it could not also cover what may already have been a gaping shortfall in the foster family's own income.

It is difficult to ascertain the level of care provided by Waifs and Strays foster parents. Although some application forms for prospective foster parents demanded details of occupation and household income, only very few of these are extant: they offer tantalising glimpses rather than a complete picture of the situation. From the little evidence available, it is clear that many of the foster parents were widows, and almost all relied upon the boarding-out allowance to supplement their own needs. When Nina P. and her brother left their placement, their foster-mother wrote: 'I am sorry to have lost them, me being a widow it is quite needful for me to look out for two more as soon as possible' (29). Others also appeared anxious to replace children who had left placements, taking their boarding-out allowance with them (30). We do not know how well foster children were fed, but the amount it cost to keep them was obviously of

crucial importance to the relationship. John C. was rejected by three successive foster mothers on account of his unusually large appetite (31).

Though the case-papers give little concrete information about the circumstances of Waifs and Strays foster parents, the allowance was set at a similar level to the money paid to those who took in poor law children. Moreover, the poor law boarding-out committees, which found homes for and supervised poor law children who had been placed outside their unions, were made up of women who came from the same social group as those who organised the foster care of Waifs and Strays children: there must, indeed, have been some overlap between the two (32). It thus seems unlikely that there were any marked differences between the homes found for either group of children: and the care provided by poor law foster parents has been well documented.

The 1909 Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws produced evidence about the physical condition of children who were boarded out: 71% of them were at least 5% below average weight, and 59% were at least 5% below average height; 52% had enlarged cervical glands, 19% had badly formed chests, and 11% had insufficient clothes. All these findings were less satisfactory than those for a comparison group of children who were living with their parents on outdoor relief, in some cases the differential was considerable (33).

Parsons, whose investigation of the condition of pauper children in Scotland has already been mentioned, found that:

the boarded out children lived in homes of precisely the same type as the ordinary outdoor relief children, with the same

standard of living, but in general exhibiting, in each aspect considered, a slightly higher achievement, better furniture, more space, more food and more pleasures (34).

While conceding that their material circumstances were slightly better than those of their parents, he made a scathing attack on the characters of foster mothers, claiming that over 60% were motivated by profit, and that in his sample of 52:

only 18 (35%) are remarkable for any ability or strength of character which might make them peculiarly fitted for the task... Seven (13%)...may all be regarded as quite unsuitable women to have children placed in their care. Women of this type do not make good homes for their own children, to whom they are bound by natural ties, and there is no justification for choosing them to care for children for whom the parish is responsible (35).

As the above remarks imply, foster parents who came from a similar class to many of the children, rarely adopted standards of child care that met the expectations of supervisors. In the early 1890s there was considerable debate as to the most effective methods of inspecting boarded-out children: observers noted how easy it was to conceal dirty and ragged undergarments under a surface appearance of cleanliness, and there was some controversy as to whether supervisors should insist on undressing children whom they visited:

Every Board school mistress has come across a class of children ... who are scrupulously clean as to face and hands, and are characterised by a general air of neatness, but roll up the sleeves or unfasten the collar, and below the high-water mark you will find flea bites so thickly clustered that a pin's point cannot be inserted between; take off the boots and the neat stockings are footless; under the tidy coat is perhaps one ragged, filthy shirt (36).

Complaints such as these were relatively common, as were allegations that boarded-out children were sometimes placed in overcrowded cottages

where they were forced to share a bed with a foster sibling (37). 'Lady' supervisors tended to regard such discoveries as evidence of deliberate neglect; they were more likely to be indications of the type of subterfuge to which respectable members of the working class were driven in order to hide the fact that there was not enough money to pay for adequate bedding, clothing, or even hot water. Indeed, such was the extent of rural poverty that Miss Lee, who acted as the Waifs and Strays inspector of boarded-out children from 1892-3, came to the conclusion that small residential homes were more beneficial than placements with foster parents for, 'the standard of village life is not what one thinks it is until one knows the people' (38).

It was Miss Lee's opinion that the Waifs and Strays foster homes were superior to those which took in poor law children (39). Even so, some of the former failed to match up to the standards of the children's own parents. Thus the Waifs and Strays placed Ethel H. with: ' a young woman with four children of her own...but her husband's earnings, being a bricklayer, are often small during the winter'. The day after the placement had been made, the foster mother ominously asked ' if you would kindly let her have the payment monthly in advance, as it is during the winter her husband's earnings are so small'. Two months later the mother's employer asked for another placement to be found, complaining that:

Mrs H. is not at all satisfied with the way Mrs E. is taking care of her baby...The child has not got on at all well the last four months, and when I saw it the other day, the child was perished and miserable...Mrs E. does not keep the child clean and has allowed her to become raw and chafed in the groin.

Mrs E. has four children, the eldest nine, the youngest not yet three, and a new baby expected very shortly. Mrs E.'s

mother is lying ill in bed in the front parlour...(40)

When no alternative placement was found, Ethel's mother decided to risk the financial uncertainty of leaving her job, and resumed the care of her child. A similar decision, it will be remembered, was also made by Rene-Marie le G.'s mother when she became concerned at the care provided in another foster home (see above, p214) (41).

Mortality

Joanna Hill, who had founded the first poor law boarding-out committee at King's Norton, claimed in 1892 that after twelve years, there had been no deaths amongst the babies placed with foster parents. Seventeen of the eighteen babies placed out by her committee had successfully passed their first birthdays; the eighteenth was still only three months old (42). If these figures are to be believed they strongly support the arguments in favour of boarding out young children: information from the census and from Rowntree's study suggests that in the population as a whole, one baby in seven (14.5%) failed to reach its first birthday, while in the poorest areas the infant mortality rate was nearly twice that high. In 1891 the census figures show a death rate of 62.9 per thousand for boys under five, and 53.5 per thousand for girls (43).

It might have been possible for the Waifs and Strays Society to make similar claims for the quality of care it was able to provide: in the sample as a whole only sixteen (4%) of the children failed to reach maturity. However when this figure is further examined, the results do not seem so satisfactory. Although the numbers are too small to make reliable

comparisons, it is evident that the Society had relatively little success in keeping alive children who were admitted at a very early age. More than one in three (35%) of the children who were under the age of two at admission failed to survive to maturity; more than one in six (18.6%) of those aged under five at admission died. In fact, half of the deaths occurred amongst children who were under the age of five at admission; all these younger children died within two years of being placed in the Society's care.

Of course some of the children were in such poor health when they entered the Society's care that there was little hope of their reaching maturity. This was obviously the case for Thomas C., who died from tuberculosis five weeks after Miss Stansfeld had overridden the objections from the executive and insisted on his being admitted to St Chad's home (44). It is not surprising to find that three of the older children who died had been placed in St Nicholas' home for crippled children. Although the Society was able to arrange regular admissions to hospital, convalescence, and a high standard of care for its handicapped children, it was not able to arrest the progressive diseases from which many of them appear to have suffered.

It must be apparent from the above discussion that most of the children who were admitted to the Society would have been suffering from the physical effects of inadequate material care. In particular the younger (and weaker) children needed good food, warmth, and medical attention if they were to thrive. I have already noted that it was the Society's policy to board out such children rather than admit them to the homes. Perhaps it

was as well that this policy was never fully implemented (see above, Chapter 3), for the physical care that foster parents were able to offer was rarely sufficient to compensate for earlier deprivation. Although the numbers are not large enough to be reliable, it is noteworthy that while only about 38% of children under seven were boarded out, 50% of those in this age-group who died were living with foster parents at the time.

The Offer of a Substitute Home

Of course not all foster homes were as unsatisfactory as those mentioned above. Some foster parents were devoted to their charges, and provided a high standard of care (45). However, the number who succeeded in meeting the Society's expectations by providing the children with permanent substitute homes was disappointingly low. Of the 93 sample children who were, at some stage, placed in foster homes, only 15 (16%) are known to have remained there after payments ceased.

Stability of placement is an obvious indicator of the quality of care an agency is able to provide. Table 11.1 shows the number of moves experienced by those sample children who spent twelve months or more in the Society's care. Placements were, on the whole, extremely stable: 54% of these children experienced no moves between admission and discharge. Table 11.2 shows that, in the sample as a whole, the most common reason for leaving a placement was a child's discharge to employment. Only 20% of all placements ended abruptly or unexpectedly.

However, the picture is somewhat different if the experiences of

TABLE 11.1

NUMBER OF PLACEMENTS WHILE IN THE SOCIETY'S CARE
(Waifs and Strays sample data 1887-1894: Children who had spent more than one year in the Society's care: N=279)

<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
1	151	54.1
2	67	24.0
3	29	10.4
4	17	6.1
5	7	2.5
6 and over	8	2.9
TOTAL		279
Not applicable/not known		121
Mean duration of period of care: 56 months		

TABLE 11.2

REASONS FOR LEAVING PLACEMENTS
(Waifs and Strays sample data 1887-1894: N=570; First five placements only)

<u>REASON FOR LEAVING</u>	<u>WHOLE SAMPLE</u>		<u>BOARDED-OUT CHILDREN</u>		<u>CHILDREN IN OTHER PLACEMENTS</u>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Planned transfer/ training	107	18.8	16	18.6	91	18.8
Died	17	3.0	5	5.8	12	2.5
Emigrated	42*	7.3	0	0.0	42	8.7
Discharged to relatives	77	13.5	11	12.8	66	13.6
Discharged to employment	212	37.2	13	15.1	199	41.1
Unforeseen breakdown of placement	115	20.2	41	47.7	74	15.3
TOTAL	570	100.0	86	100.0	484	100.0
Not Known	106					

*Two boys emigrated and then returned to the Society's care in England before being discharged. One girl was only emigrated after her eighth placement.

boarded-out children are examined separately. Firstly, the figures show that, in spite of claims to the contrary, the Waifs and Strays did not follow to any significant extent, the policy adopted by both Barnardo and Stephenson, of removing older children from foster homes to residential care in order to offer them a period of intensive religious and vocational training before discharge: almost as many boarded-out children were discharged directly to employment as were transferred for further training. Nor did the Waifs and Strays engage in Barnardo's practice of removing children from foster homes in order to send them to Canada. None of the boarded-out children in the sample left for this reason.

Secondly, however, and perhaps of greater interest, the figures do show that by far the commonest reason for a child's leaving a foster-home, accounting for almost half of all departures, was the unforeseen breakdown of the placement. Children placed in foster homes were more than three times as likely to experience unexpected breakdowns as those placed in residential care. Table 11.3 breaks down these figures further, and demonstrates the reasons for disruption. It was widely believed that the interference of natural parents would not be tolerated in most foster homes, and indeed, this assumption was sometimes given as a reason for concealing a child's address. In a number of Waifs and Strays cases assertions were made as to the threat that parents could pose to the stability of a foster home (46). Yet we know from Chapter 10 that it was extremely rare for the Society to deny access to parents. In spite of this policy, and contrary to the popular assumptions, only one foster placement

TABLE 11.3

REASONS FOR UNEXPECTED BREAKDOWN OF FOSTER-PLACEMENTS

(Waifs and Strays sample data 1887-1894: 41 cases)

<u>REASON FOR LEAVING</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Foster-parents unsatisfactory/ unable to cope	10	24.4
Death/illness of foster-parents	4	9.8
Inelegibility of foster-home	5	12.2
Child's behaviour	15	36.6
Child's ill-health	1	2.4
Child absconded	1	2.4
Parents' arrears of maintenance	2	4.9
Parents' interference	1	2.4
Other	2	4.9
TOTAL		41
		100.0

came to an end as a result of parental interference.

The majority of foster placements broke down either as a result of the child's behaviour, or through some inadequacy on the part of the foster parent. It is probable that these two features interacted, in that an inadequate foster home was likely to exacerbate a child's behavioural problems. Children were at greatest risk of losing their foster homes between about nine and twelve years of age. It may be that as they grew older, the inadequacies of the foster home became more apparent: certainly a number of boys were removed from the care of elderly widows because they were believed to need the control of a man (47). However, there were also sound economic reasons why foster homes should disrupt when children reached this age. We have already seen that the majority of foster parents were dependent upon the boarding-out allowance for their own survival. This did not generally increase as children grew older and became more expensive to maintain. Supervisors were supposed to check on the school attendance of boarded-out children; presumably they would also have taken steps to prevent their working long hours in part-time jobs. Thus as foster children grew older, the financial incentive to keep them diminished. Perhaps it is not surprising that in so many instances the relationship foundered.

Thus while a few, exceptional foster homes provided children with a high level of care in permanent substitute families, the majority did not. In many instances it would have been difficult to claim that the condition of the Society's children improved once they were boarded out. Not only were their material circumstances only marginally , if at all, superior to

those they had left behind, but they also suffered the disadvantage of instability. Did children within the Society's homes fare any better?

Inside the Society's Homes

Contemporary photographs of the early Waifs and Strays homes often show imposing buildings, far removed from the small family homes of the advertisements, and even further removed from the squalid cottages or slums where the children had previously lived. By today's standards, many of them would appear bleak and uncomfortable. Few possessed such luxuries as carpeted floors or central heating. Moreover, the cots inscribed with the names of donors and the ubiquitous religious texts might appear oppressive to a modern observer. Nevertheless, in the 1880s and 1890s, in comparison with the children's home circumstances, they were able to provide an impressive standard of care, for they were regularly maintained, and had running water, adequately equipped kitchens and bathrooms. The industrial school at Standon even had a swimming pool. Moreover, they were spotlessly, not to say obsessively, clean.

In the early days, the food provided by the Society was far from lavish. The matron of the first home in Dulwich was allowed 3s 6d per week to feed each child - only eleven pence more than the minimum prescribed by Rowntree. Moreover, by modern standards the diet would scarcely be considered nutritious: on two days of the week suet pudding was served at the main meal as a substitute for meat or fish, and most days the milk served at breakfast and tea was diluted with water (48). Even this diet was obviously superior to that which most of the children would have

experienced at home. By the years of the sample it had considerably improved: in 1886, the girls at the Marylebone Home had meat or fish every day for their main meal (49), while by 1887 the weekly allowance for children's food at St Michael's Orphanage had risen to 5s 2d per head (50). It is not surprising that contemporaries noted marked improvements in the physical appearance of many of the children who came into the Society's care (51).

The children's appearance was the most visible sign of their change of circumstances: before and after photographs of barefoot, ragged urchins transformed into neat young citizens with well-brushed hair, scrubbed faces and respectable clothes were regularly used to good effect as publicity material by many of the voluntary societies. In 1887 the Hon. Mrs Bulkeley Owen launched a needlework scheme, through which working parties were organised to provide house linen and clothing for the Society's children. She drew up lists to specify exactly what each child would require. Assuming that well-wishers would sew the garments themselves, the cost of the materials to clothe a ten-year-old girl came to about £2- 12s- 1d. The cost of clothing a boy was about six shillings more. We do not know how many of the children actually received the garments on the list, but in both quantity and quality they were incomparably superior to the rags they had previously worn. Little girls who had previously slept in whatever clothes they had, and managed with little or no underwear, were now entitled to 'three nightgowns, three chemises, three pairs of drawers, two stays, and three petticoats',- and all of them new. Boys who had previously been similarly deprived were

now expected to own three nightshirts and two suits: a tweed one for Sundays, and a corduroy one for every day. Boys' underwear was still, however, conspicuously lacking (52).

In later years, the habit of thrift appears to have prevented both diet and clothing from keeping up with rising prices and improved living standards. A report in the 1930s found that the stature of children brought up in the homes had begun to lag behind that of children in the general population (53). The early Waifs and Strays Society has been recently criticised for cropping the children's hair and for occasionally dressing them in a uniform which must have emphasised their charitable status (54).

Such retrospective criticisms should not obscure the indubitable truth that, during the 1880s and 1890s, admission to the Society's homes vastly improved the material circumstances of large numbers of children. Cropped hair and a uniform may have seemed a minor disadvantage to those who had been accustomed to headlice and rags. The homes were dry and clean. The children never went barefoot, and they possessed outdoor coats and nightclothes; they each had a bed to themselves, with blankets and sheets. When they were ill they received medical attention; some of them underwent expensive hospital treatment to correct handicaps, after which they were sent to the country to convalesce. Some homes were able to provide luxuries such as summer outings and Christmas treats. In the early years a number of homes took all their inmates for annual three-week holidays by the sea, by arrangement with the superintendent of the Gordon Boys' Home in Dover (55). Most significantly of all, a constant supply of regular

meals indisputably saved many children from permanent debilitation, if not downright starvation. These enormous material gains must always be balanced against the disadvantages of the system that later became apparent.

The Influence of Charity

Most contemporary middle-class observers believed that it was injudicious to provide large gifts of food, clothing or money to the destitute. In spite of the wealth of evidence he had produced to demonstrate the consequences of inadequate wages, Rowntree still claimed that ultimately, the poor would not benefit from increased charity for 'any gain in material comfort would have been dearly purchased at the cost of independence of character, and the consequences of such artificial support would be grave, economically as well as morally' (56).

Yet those who turned away from the sight of children begging with their parents in the streets willingly donated cash, food and clothing when assistance to the same recipients could be channelled through a rescue society. While the destitute could not ask for help without incurring stinging criticism, those who worked on their behalf could beg shamelessly. The Waifs and Strays' magazine regularly published a successful 'we want' column through which the matrons of homes asked for gifts of bedding, furniture, and clothes. Lists of donations ranging from bales of cloth to expensive musical instruments were also published, thereby advertising the generosity of their donors. Each home held an annual 'pound day' to replenish the larder by soliciting gifts of produce

from its neighbours. Many of the Waifs and Strays' supporters were also patrons of other charitable bodies which could be persuaded to assist the Society's children: thus as well as providing cash and material goods, they also used their influence to obtain tickets for treatment in voluntary hospitals, surgical appliances for the crippled children at St Nicholas' Home, and votes which enabled a small number of 'respectable' children to enter the more traditional orphanages (57).

It was partly this freedom to beg that enabled the homes to outdistance to such an extent the care that both parents and foster parents could provide. After all, how many parents could hope to receive a piano as a gift? Although a foster child might be clothed by his supervisor, foster parents lacked the financial pull of the homes; their allowance could not be supplemented by produce from 'pound days', and there were no benevolent organisations ready to offer them holidays. It was consonant with the prominence given to the virtues of independence that the care offered to destitute children within the community should fall far short of that which the Society's homes were able to provide.

However, it was not the Society's aim simply to provide its children with adequate material care during their years of dependency. As has previously been suggested, the major purpose of both the Waifs and Strays and of other voluntary societies was to provide destitute children with a training that would enable them permanently to rise above the cycle of casual employment, pauperism and depravity from which they had allegedly been saved. The ultimate success or failure of the Society's intervention

can largely be judged by the extent to which it was able to meet this objective.

Education, Training and Employment Prospects

Most of the Waifs and Strays children attended local schools, where they often did well. The intelligence that they were believed to have acquired through living from hand to mouth on the streets of the large cities was considered to contrast sharply with the dullness of their contemporaries; indeed their presence in a school was believed to 'sharpen the wits of their rustic school-mates'. It is not, however, surprising that they were widely perceived to be more alert than their contemporaries. We have already seen that they were better fed and clothed. They are also likely to have had more sleep. The children in most of the Society's homes were in bed between about 8.00 p.m. and 6 a.m.; those who lived in the community and had to cope with a job as well as school sometimes began work at 4.30 a.m., or finished at 9.p.m. (58). The academic prowess of children from the homes is more likely to be attributable to adequate food, sleep and the lack of opportunities for non-attendance than to an innate superiority of intelligence. With these advantages, it is not surprising that they often won prizes at school: in 1889, two of the boys in the Worcester home won their class prizes, and in 1890 nine of the girls from the Harrow home won prizes in the Board School needlework examination (59).

This is not to say that children from the Society's homes did no work outside school hours. Their lives were often dominated by a series of

household tasks. The girls were expected to do all their own housework, and in many homes the children did a large share of the gardening. Several of the older children also had part-time jobs in the local community: thus 'all the elder boys (from the Leicester Boys Home) go out to various gentlemen's houses in the neighbourhood, where for an hour or so each morning they are employed in kitchen or garden, according to the season' (60) Nevertheless, there is no evidence that Waifs and Strays children were expected to cope with the excessive demands that were made of many of their contemporaries. When children from the most economically fragile families tended to attend school irregularly, or to be too tired to concentrate when they were there, those who spent several years in care may well have emerged with the better education. This may have been as true for children who were cared for in poor law institutions as for those who were admitted to the voluntary societies.

The Society did not, however, advertise the educational advantages that would accrue from admission so much as the opportunities for vocational training. The relationship between unemployment, criminal behaviour and unrest was widely recognised: together with all the major voluntary societies, the Waifs and Strays claimed to provide children with the skills that would enable them to gain permanent, secure employment in adult life. In fact, a number of children entered the Society's homes in adolescence expressly for the purpose of improving their position on the labour market (61).

Within the Society's homes and industrial schools, the children were

trained for a range of possible jobs. Although almost all the girls were prepared for general domestic service, a number were also taught specialist skills. In 1887, the home at Arnold Grove was opened 'for the production of useful and thoroughly grounded young kitchen-maids and cooks'. The Fareham Home ran a successful laundry: many of the girls who trained here were considered to be too rough or too difficult for ordinary domestic service, suggesting that those who left as laundry-maids went into commercial organisations rather than private houses. The Beckett Home trained other girls, who were considered unsuited to domestic service, in machine knitting. A small number of exceptionally bright girls were allowed to train as pupil teachers. Boys were given a wider range of employment options: Standon Farm School trained potential emigrants and others to work as agricultural labourers; boys in the other homes learned printing, tailoring, bakery and market gardening. The Society also had a close connection with C.A.Stein's House Boys Brigade, which, for a fee of £10, took in young boys to train as servants in large houses.

Very little can be gleaned from the case-papers about the employment history of those Waifs and Strays children who emigrated. The average age of emigration was twelve years eight months for boys and thirteen years five months for girls: most emigrants started work almost immediately after their arrival in Canada. It seems, from the information on table 11.6 below, that they were expected to be able to support themselves about eighteen months earlier than the Waifs and Strays children who remained in Britain. From the evidence of studies of other organisations it is to be assumed that the majority became agricultural

labourers or domestic servants on small farms, but little is known about their experiences (62). The sample does, however, yield information on the subsequent employment of 179 children who remained in Britain after leaving the Society's care. Tables 11.4 and 11.5 give details of their first paid, full-time jobs; table 11.6 shows the ages at which they began them.

It seems clear that the Waifs and Strays children who remained in Britain tended to start work not only at a later date than those who emigrated, but also considerably later than many of their contemporaries: 77% of them did not enter full-time employment until after their fourteenth birthdays, and 27% had reached sixteen before they started work. There was, therefore, plenty of time for most of them to train for a skilled occupation before they left the protection of the Society. Examination of the children's occupations, however, suggests that their often lengthy period of training only rarely resulted in the acquisition of genuinely marketable skills: only 26 (15%) of the children entered occupations that demanded any degree of expertise, and perhaps I am stretching a point by including seven laundry maids within this group; 138 (77%) of all the children began their careers in unskilled, private domestic service.

This information is more revealing if the the different sexes are looked at separately, as has been done in the tables. The tables show that the boys tended to leave school at an earlier age than the girls, and that a greater proportion of them entered skilled occupations. Further information reveals that twelve of the boys (and only one girl)

TABLE 11.4

FIRST FULL-TIME PAID OCCUPATIONS IN BRITAIN: BOYS
(Waifs and Strays sample data 1887-1894;N=49)

OCCUPATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	PERCENTAGE OF FATHERS IN SAME OCCUPATION GROUP
A: PROFESSIONAL,MANAGERIAL	Nil	0.0	
subtotal	0	0.0	4.4
B: DEFENCE AND PUBLIC ORDER			
Army	2	4.1	
subtotal	2	4.1	2.2
C: INDUSTRY			
Mining	1	2.05	
Textile Industry	1	2.05	
subtotal	2	4.1	7.0
D: MAINTENANCE AND CONSTRUCTION			
House-building and maintenance	2	4.1	
subtotal	2	4.1	11.4
E: TRANSPORT			
Railways	1	2.05	
Messenger/porter	3	6.1	
subtotal	4	8.05	13.5
F: SKILLED RETAIL TRADES			
Printer/Compositor	6	12.2	
Tailor/Dressmaker/Hatter/Glover/ Barber etc	1 1	2.05 2.05	
subtotal	8	16.3	16.1
G: GENERAL RETAIL			
Shop assistant	1	2.05	
subtotal	1	2.05	5.9
H: CATERING			
Publican/Barmaid/Waiter	1	2.05	
subtotal	1	2.05	3.3

I: SERVICE

Private Domestic Service:Indoor	21	42.85	
Outdoor	1	2.05	

subtotal	22	44.9	7.4
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J: AGRICULTURAL

Skilled agricultural worker	3	6.1	
Agricultural labourer	3	6.1	
Fisherman	1	2.05	

subtotal	7	8.25	5.2
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K: ENTERTAINMENT

Nil	0.0	
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subtotal	0	0.0	1.1
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L: GENERAL LABOUR

Nil	0.0	
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subtotal	0	0.0	22.8
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TOTAL	49	100.0	100.0
Not known			

Table 11.5

FIRST FULL-TIME PAID OCCUPATIONS IN BRITAIN: GIRLS
(Waifs and Strays sample data 1887-1894:N=130)

<u>OCCUPATION</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE OF LONE MOTHERS IN SAME OCCUPATION GROUP</u>
A: PROFESSIONAL, MANAGERIAL	Nil	0.0	
subtotal	0.0	0.0	5.7
C: INDUSTRY			
Textile Industry	2	1.5	
subtotal	2	1.5	0.8
F: SKILLED RETAIL TRADES			
Tailor/Dressmaker/Hatter/Glover etc	2	1.5	
subtotal	2	1.5	9.7
G: GENERAL RETAIL			
Shop assistant	1	0.8	
subtotal	1	0.8	1.6
H: CATERING	Nil		
subtotal	0.0	0.0	5.7
I: SERVICE			
Caretaker/Institutional service	2	1.5	
Private Domestic Service:Indoor	122	93.9	
Casual	1	0.8	
subtotal	125	96.2	62.6
TOTAL	130	100.0	100.0
Not known			

TABLE 11.6

AGE OF FIRST PAID FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT IN BRITAIN
(Waifs and Strays sample data 1887-1894: N=189)

BOYS (N=61)

<u>AGE</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
11	1	1.7
12	5	8.2
13	16	26.2
14	18	29.5
15	13	21.3
16	6	9.8
17	2	3.3
18	0	0.0
Over 18	0	0.0
TOTAL		61
Not known		105
		100.0

Mean: 14 years

GIRLS (N=128)

<u>AGE</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>
12	3	2.3
13	18	14.1
14	33	25.8
15	31	24.2
16	24	18.8
17	11	8.6
18	4	3.1
Over 18	4	3.1
Total	128	100.0
Not known	106	

Mean: 15 years

entered into formal apprenticeships which offered a lengthy training but could eventually lead to a useful qualification. William T., for instance, spent three years in the tailor's shop at Standon, was then, at seventeen, given a formal apprenticeship, completed his indentures, and eventually ran his own tailoring business in which he employed eight assistants. His parents were tramps, and he had been committed to industrial school in 1894 on the grounds of vagrancy. His history substantiates the Society's claim that its intervention could result in a meteoric change of circumstances, for the possibility of his parents having had either the motivation or the resources to set him up in such a career must have been extremely remote (63).

The difficulty is that cases such as that of William T. appear to have been extremely rare. Although an apprenticeship was probably the best means of enabling a child to acquire a skill which would secure his future employment, it was also expensive. Not only did employers require the Society to pay a premium, but also, in the initial years, wages were so small that they had to be subsidised. Moreover, young adolescents did not always have the stamina to complete their indentures; about one in three of the apprentices from the sample are known to have terminated the agreement prematurely (64). By 1905, Rudolf was claiming that as a means of vocational training, apprenticeship had proved both costly and unsatisfactory (65). In fact, some of the 'apprenticeships' offered little training, and were no more than a contract to provide a child with food, shelter and minimal wages in exchange for his labour. Henry K. was one of the few children apprenticed through the Waifs and Strays to the Grimsby

fishing fleet: he had been in prison twice for theft, and it is difficult not to see his 'apprenticeship' as a means of distancing him from the Society's sphere of responsibility rather than as a genuine attempt to provide him with a permanent occupation (66).

It is revealing to compare the table of occupations which boys entered on their discharge from the Society with that showing how their fathers had been employed (see table 6.3, p.200). Chapter 6 has demonstrated the close relationship between the casual employment of a breadwinner, and his family's eventual destitution. While nearly 23% of fathers were unskilled labourers, who led a precarious existence on the edges of pauperism, none of their sons came into this category. Taken at face value, this figure would appear to vindicate the Society's claims to break the vicious circle of 'hereditary' pauperism. However, when examined more closely, the picture is not quite so rosy. As Stedman-Jones has described, in the late nineteenth century there were separate markets for juvenile and adult labour. Many jobs that were open to boys never paid adult wages; a number were closed to young men of eighteen and over. Those who entered such occupations tended to find themselves thrown onto the adult casual labour market in their twenties, and by then it was too late to acquire the type of skills that would secure them regular employment. Stedman-Jones lists those who were most at risk as 'errand boys, vanboys, printers' assistants, and shop and factory boys' : 41% of those Waifs and Strays boys who did not go into private service went into these occupations (67).

Moreover, many of the remainder went into jobs that did not necessarily have a bias towards the juvenile labour market, but were nevertheless notorious for their casualisation: thus Walter B. who was 'apprenticed' as a painter to his step-brother, Harry R. who became a waiter, and John T. who left to work for a barber were unlikely to have found regular employment throughout their adult lives (68). Tom T. was probably describing an experience common to many boys when he wrote:

I certainly went to work for a little country baker after I left schooling, but what did I learn? Why, how to carry large baskets of bread about and in general anything except learning the rudiments of the trade...

No doubt you will see that owing to being launched on the world without a proper start has something to do with (my predicament) and even I myself must be entitled to a little credit for having managed to keep myself alive since I was 14 years of age, receiving as I did in my first place one shilling weekly (69).

No children were discharged from the Society's care as unemployed adults and left to fend for themselves, (though it should be noted that eight of those whose first employments are not known, were 'returned to the care of the guardians'). It does, however, appear that few boys had any greater chance of earning a secure livelihood than had their fathers: as is evident from the table, the proportion of boys employed in those spheres which gave the greatest job security (that is, professional and managerial occupations, the skilled retail trades and industry) was either the same or less than the proportion of fathers. This is not to say that the effect of the Society's intervention was negligible as far as job prospects were concerned: after all, a large number of boys were the children of lone mothers, and therefore might

otherwise have started their working lives from a worse position than had their fathers. Nevertheless, the figures do suggest that the impact of the Society's industrial training programme was relatively insignificant.

It is useful to ask why the Society should have spent so much time and money in training children for occupations that either they never took up, or that proved to be dangerously insecure: why did it not prefer to direct its resources into providing the children with more securely marketable skills, or into building up links with safe employers such as the railway companies or the Post Office? The type of skills that were taught provides an explanation for this anomaly. Printing, baking, tailoring, market gardening, farming and housework not only formed the basis of industrial training provided by the Waifs and Strays, but also by the other voluntary societies, many of which also trained their children for yet another highly precarious occupation, shoemaking. The reason for such a choice was that these skills, while of little commercial value to many of the children after discharge, when practised within the homes, significantly lessened the running costs. The children were taught to be almost self-sufficient: they could make and mend their own clothes, grow their own food and do their own cooking and cleaning. Those who learned printing at Frome also produced the mass of forms and documents required by the Society's administration. The girls in the laundry home at Fareham and the knitting school in Leeds took in outside work, thus earning back a proportion of their maintenance; those in the Fareham home were regularly able to repay about half the cost of their support (70).

Obviously, as the children grew older, they became more useful in the

running of the homes, and there was a greater temptation to exploit their (unpaid) labour. Those who had passed the requisite standards and gained certificates of exemption generally attended school as half-timers, spending the rest of the day in employment within the homes. The older girls in the residential homes spent half their time in school and the other half doing the domestic work of the home under the guise of 'training for service'. Those in the industrial schools, who were educated on the premises, were probably allowed to devote even less time to academic work. In 1887, the inspector of the Society's industrial school at Hemel Hempstead noted:

I have to ask that a strict rule be laid down, that no child should be continuously kept out of the schoolroom, for the sake of the household work or general convenience. If a girl be taken away from school hours, the time should be made up. Every girl ought to have, at least, three hours of secular instruction every day (71, his emphasis).

Seen in this light, it is easy to interpret the lengthy period which children often spent in the homes between leaving school and beginning employment as a period of exploitation, during which the Society reclaimed through their labour some of the expenses that had been incurred in their upbringing. The evidence from the case-papers suggests, for instance, that girls who were particularly useful in the laundry homes had their discharge delayed until capable replacements could be found for them (72).

In the early years of this century, the Brighton home appears to have been particularly aware of the contributions its inmates could make to the internal economy, and to have treated them accordingly. When Mary W. was seventeen, her mother became concerned at her continued lack of employment and travelled some 150 miles to see her. She found that she was

'kept constantly at work', doing the sewing for the home. She also felt that Mary was insufficiently fed, getting nothing to eat each day after a meal of bread and treacle at five o'clock. Both Mrs W. , and Mary's sponsor, a Miss Karslake, who was still paying towards her keep, wrote to the matron, but received no reply. Mrs W. then approached the Society's representative in her home town, who relayed the story to Rudolf. After making enquiries, he stopped the maintenance payments, and suggested to the matron of the home that Mary should be paid for her services. It is unclear whether or not this happened, but it was more than five years before she finally left the Brighton Home to work for a milliner; the matron's initial reply to Rudolf had ominously stated: ' the girl is so very useful in the Home that we shall hardly know how to spare her, as she does so much of the needlework' (73, her emphasis).

As has been mentioned in an earlier chapter, it was common for the voluntary societies to criticise the selfishness of parents who exploited the earning potential of their adolescent children. Parker has pointed out the blindness of those philanthropists who exploited the same children for identical ends, yet failed to see the similarities in their own behaviour (74). The societies also criticised the lack of compassion shown by parents to children who were unable to contribute significantly to the family income, yet once again, they were not always exempt from such behaviour themselves. It is probably not coincidental that the following case also concerns a child from the Brighton home.

Mary H. was initially sent to the Waifs and Strays in order to escape the attentions of an aunt who, allegedly, 'used her as a little drudge'.

She had a weak heart, and therefore was not sent out to service at fourteen; when she was twenty-three she was officially discharged, but kept on as a servant in the home at a nominal wage of £5 per year. When Mary was twenty-five, an 'old girl' wrote to Rudolf, claiming that 'she feels it very much not being able to earn her living as we strong ones do'. Within days, another 'old girl' wrote with more details: according to her letter, Mary was forbidden to communicate with the former inmates of the home, and was not allowed out, except to clean the church or to attend services. She was sent to bed as though she were a child if she disobeyed. In effect, the matron was punishing Mary for her inability to contribute to her maintenance in exactly the same way as her relations might have done. In spite of Mary's extremely poor health, Rudolf moved her to St Nicholas' home where she appears to have met with kinder treatment in the few months before she died (75).

Domestic Service

While most of the trades taught in the homes were of more use to the Society than to the children in later life, the skills that were required in domestic service were believed to be of particular and permanent value to those who had been 'rescued' from destitution.

The information on subsequent employment (tables 11.4 and 11.5) show that the major area in which children's occupations differed from those of their parents was not in the increased numbers of those entering skilled or secure occupations, but in the numbers who went into private domestic service: while only 7% of fathers had been so employed, nearly 45% of

their sons began their working lives as servants. Among the girls, the differential was similar: while 60% of mothers had been in private service, nearly 95% of their daughters started their working lives in this capacity.

These figures not only show a difference between the occupations of Waifs and Strays children and their parents, they also reveal considerable disparity between their occupations and those of the general population: according to the 1891 census, 1% of boys and 30% of girls aged between fifteen and twenty were employed in private domestic service (76); although service was the most common occupation for girls, the largest group of boys were employed as agricultural labourers. Moreover, Parker's research suggests that the Waifs and Strays may have sent a greater proportion of its boys into service than did some of the other child care organisations: he found that while 99% of poor law girls began their working lives as servants, only about 5% of boys did so, a more popular option being the armed forces or the merchant marine (77). We need to know why domestic service was such a popular option for almost all girls who had been separated from home and, particularly, why the Waifs and Strays considered that it would provide a suitable opening for such a large proportion of its boys.

The answer appears to lie in the extent to which domestic service was believed to meet the children's needs. All the major child care organisations recognised the advantages of finding residential occupations for separated children, who, on leaving their care, would often be without a home. Domestic service was also particularly valued for

girls in that it taught them the skills they would later need as respectable wives and mothers, and provided them with a measure of protection through adolescence into adulthood. The Waifs and Strays may have had exceptional reasons for emphasising its advantages: as will be apparent from earlier chapters, the Society relied heavily upon the existence of a particular relationship between women from the upper middle classes and the poor. These women acted as representatives of the Society, they referred children, found and supervised foster placements, and often organised financial sponsorship. It was through their influence that children were rescued from deprivation, and brought into contact with the standards and values of a 'superior' class. The civilising effects of these values could be re-inforced by placing the children out as servants in the homes of people from the same class as their referrers, and indeed, there was some overlap between the two groups. In many ways, a placement in service was designed to offer a child a continuation of the type of training offered in the homes. Mistresses who employed a Waifs and Strays child were expected to perpetuate the Society's work, by prolonging the period of separation from family, by reinforcing the habits of discipline and deference that had previously been taught, and in many instances, by continuing to emphasise the hope of salvation through Christianity. Although the protection that domestic service could offer was regarded as a particular benefit to girls, there was no reason why boys should not profit from the same advantageous relationship. Only the larger households employed male servants: unlike many of the other societies, the Waifs and Strays was fortunate in that its supporters

included several members of the aristocracy and the upper middle classes, who were able to offer such openings.

Even in the 1890s, the heavy emphasis placed on service by the major voluntary societies and the poor law authorities, was beginning to be questioned. Writing in 1894, Gertrude Tuckwell pointed out that domestic service and laundry work were by no means the best paid occupations for women. She recommended that girls should be trained as 'hands' for the hosiery trade, or taught bookbinding or cigar-making (78). She also deplored organisations such as the Girls Friendly Society, which provided support for young servants, claiming that they showed:

a tendency to patronage and an old-fashioned view that the one thing needful is that the children should 'submit themselves lowly and reverently to all their betters'. not only in the Societies, but even in the Clubs and Benefit Societies inaugurated by ladies, this unlucky element often creeps in (79).

Such criticism, however, missed the point. Service was not chosen as a desirable occupation for its financial rewards, but for the very reason that Tuckwell deplored: its ability to reinforce the children's deferential relationship with the respectable middle classes, and to enable them to benefit from their patronage. Paradoxically, it was only those girls who had shown themselves to be unsuitable for service who were offered alternative training for more lucrative employment in commercial laundries or machine knitting (80).

The type of situations which were sought by the Waifs and Strays Society were only to be found in the 'better' households. The middle-class ladies whom the Society sought out as employers would not take rough, untutored adolescents, for they expected their servants to be

adequately trained both in domestic skills and in demeanour for the work. Thus it is not surprising to find that the major emphasis on vocational training for girls lay in the acquisition of domestic skills.

There is no doubt that such training was necessary: young girls who had spent their lives in cramped tenements or cottages without proper cooking or washing facilities would have had few appropriate domestic skills to offer if they sought employment in a 'respectable' household. Nor would they have been able to acquire an appropriate outfit, or produce the type of neat, docile appearance that a good mistress required. Those who did find service jobs were usually reduced to working as 'slaveys' in households that were too poor to employ more than one servant; they were notoriously overworked and often ill-treated. Thus the Society had good reason to claim that 'a year of good training under kindly, firm management, in an atmosphere of regularity, order and neatness will probably transform the girl and alter all her future' (81).

While the Society assumed that the 'better' class of employer would offer more than just a residential domestic situation to their children, these expectations were never spelled out. There were good practical reasons why Waifs and Strays children should have been popular employees: not only was their training far better than that of children who entered service directly from working-class homes, but also the policies of severance ensured that they would be free of a problem commonly found among servants: the interference of relatives. Although few employers can have been ignorant of the children's antecedents, there is little concrete information as to their motivation in offering them jobs. A

number must have been moved by the same philanthropic considerations that activated the Society, and consciously acknowledged the benefits that employment within their households could confer. It seems probable that the clergymen who took on ten-year-old boys to act as pages intended to offer them more than simply employment and shelter (82). However, the fact that employers came from the same class as referrers did not ensure their philanthropic intentions, and many regarded their obligations towards the children as entirely commercial. Few employers were prepared to make allowances for the failings of Waifs and Strays children and many of the arrangements were unsuccessful. Others, like the parish ladies who had referred the children, may have found that an initial enthusiasm to offer assistance to a deprived child evaporated when difficulties became apparent. The case-papers only provide information about the employment histories of 25 girls who went out to service, and this should, perhaps, be treated with some caution, as the Society would have been more likely to have retained contact with those who failed to settle than with those whose early working lives were relatively uneventful; nevertheless, as table 11.7 shows, eleven (44%) of these girls were sacked from their first situations; seven (28%) lost their jobs in less than six months.

It would be interesting to know how many young people who had grown up in the care of their families were sacked from their first situations. There is no doubt that some of the Society's children were extremely disturbed and would have had difficulty in holding down a job under any circumstances. A number had been admitted to the Waifs and Strays for

TABLE 11.7

REASONS FOR LEAVING FIRST JOBS IN DOMESTIC SERVICE (GIRLS)
(Waifs and Strays sample data 1887-1894: 25 cases)

<u>REASON</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Moved to a better job	3	12.0
Returned to relations	5	20.0
Ill-health	3	12.0
Unsatisfactory placement: removed by Society	2	8.0
No longer needed	1	4.0
Sacked (temper)	3	12.0
Sacked (dishonesty)	1	4.0
Sacked (no reason given)	7	28.0
TOTAL		25
Not known		97

further training for that very reason. There is also a strong correlation between the ages at which children started work and the likelihood of their retaining their jobs: it seems possible that a large number of all children who were aged twelve or under when they entered full-time employment were simply too immature to sustain the level of commitment required. As they grew older, they found it easier to avoid dismissal. However, it also seems likely that a large number of Waifs and Strays children were sacked from their first jobs because their employers had failed to appreciate the extent of the commitment that the Society had expected them to bring to the arrangement.

Protection

The above analysis demonstrates that the Society's attempts to find substitute homes for its younger children with foster parents, and for its older adolescents through domestic service were relatively unsuccessful. In fact, it was within the residential homes that the greatest commitment to the children appears to have been found.

According to the Society's published documents, the emotional and spiritual care provided by the homes easily matched their high material standards. However, an earlier chapter has pointed out that many of them were far too big to be run on anything but institutional lines. The persistent claim that the numerous inmates regarded themselves as members of a large family was difficult to sustain in view of the numerous rules and strict timetabling that seemed necessary to run such complex organisations. Moreover, in a number of the homes, some of the Society's

most widely advertised precepts were disregarded.

Thus the Waifs and Strays magazine frequently objected to the widespread custom of dressing charity or pauper children in distinctive uniforms which set them apart from their contemporaries and emphasised their dependent status. Yet the group photographs from many of the Waifs and Strays homes taken during the sample period show children whose clothes appear suspiciously similar in both pattern and material (83).

Similarly, the Society's magazine commonly criticised the supposedly inferior care offered in poor law institutions where, it was alleged, children were so impersonally brought up that they were sometimes known by numbers rather than names. Yet at the beginning of the century an identical policy appears to have prevailed in the Waifs and Strays home at Longwells Green, where, according to one previous inmate, on arrival: 'my hair was shaved off, my name was submerged, and I became for the next couple of years Number 14' (84). One of the sample children encountered a similarly depersonalising experience when, on arriving at the St Hilda's home, she found her name altered to prevent mistakes since 'we already had one Annie and three Marys' (85).

The Society was very loosely organised; the matrons of individual homes were given considerable freedom to ignore the exhortations from the central office. It is possible that the odd instance where a policy that had been cherished by the executive was disregarded at a local level, simply represented a local idiosyncrasy. Bowder argues that although the Society itself was liberal in outlook, some of the well-established homes that later became incorporated into the Waifs and Strays had been very

repressive - a tradition which was sustained when the old staff were transferred along with the premises (86). It was suggested earlier that the strong emphasis on rescue displayed by the Hull home may have originated with its foundation by the Association for the Care of Friendless Girls (see above, p.340).

One could, however, also argue that the temptation to dress the children in identical clothes and to ignore their names were extreme manifestations of a deliberate policy to form a corporate identity which would override their individual personalities. Home children were expected to exhibit recognisable characteristics that would be regarded as a credit to their upbringing. Above all, they were taught to be orderly, well-disciplined and subservient: these were, after all, the qualities required of young servants. Individuality had little place in such a scheme.

The other side of the coin was that , while membership of the Homes may have served to suppress individuality, it nevertheless entitled the children to a degree of protection that they would almost certainly not have encountered elsewhere. Although I have argued that the policy which kept children within the homes beyond the school leaving age and into late adolescence was designed to enable the Society to benefit from their economic potential, nevertheless it meant that they were not required to take responsibility for their own survival until a much later date than would have otherwise been the case. Moreover, it was policy for the staff of the homes to prolong their relationship with children who had left, at least until they had succeeded in settling into a steady job. Perhaps the most striking manifestation of this extended protection lay in the

readiness with which, unlike some of their contemporary organisations, the Waifs and Strays homes would readmit children who had lost their jobs (87). About one in four children (38 girls and 12 boys), who left the Society's homes for employment, returned for further training after their situations had failed. Twelve children were readmitted on more than one occasion.

Although the Society did continue to support boys who were experiencing difficulties in sustaining jobs, its major efforts were directed towards the support of girls. Girls were considered to be in need of particular protection, for there was always the fear that, even after extensive years of training, those who were cast adrift would succumb to prostitution. Thus girls were not only readmitted when their employment failed, they were also offered extensive after-care, even after they had officially left the Society's protection. In 1899 Rudolf circulated a memorandum encouraging the local committees to write to girls in service and to send them occasional presents (88). All the girls homes appear to have built up extensive links with the Girls Friendly Society, yet another organisation run by middle-class ladies, whose aim was to provide support and advice to young servants. A major feature of this organisation were the cash incentives it provided to those who demonstrated the effectiveness of the Society's disciplinary training by remaining over a year in any job, however unsatisfactory it turned out to be. The homes also offered accommodation to old girls who were on holiday, the staff wrote to them regularly, and at least in Dickleborough, all the old girls were remembered at Christmas (89). More than the foster parents, the

sponsors and the employers, it appears to have been the staff of the Society's homes who provided the children with the commitment they required.

It is, of course, not possible to measure exactly the gains and losses that children sustained by entering the Society's care. The evidence suggests that parents were more often deprived than depraved, and there is little to support the claim that foster parents, whose own economic circumstances were rarely more secure, could offer a substantially higher level of care. The middle-class ladies, who provided the cash to support the children, rarely possessed the commitment to maintain them throughout their long years of dependency. Those who employed them in subsequent years may have had little or no philanthropic motivation: certainly few were prepared to make allowances for the failings of young servants whose antecedents were less than desirable. It was within the Society's homes that the highest standards of material care and, perhaps, the greatest commitment to the children were found. The homes did little to provide the children with the type of skills that would earn them lucrative employment in adult life, but they did offer a training programme that enabled them to obtain posts as domestic servants in the 'better' middle-class households, where it was hoped they would benefit from the prolonged contact and possible patronage of the gentry. This training was often acquired at the expense of initiative and individuality. From the perspective of the day, it is likely that these outcomes of the Society's care would have been judged as generally

successful, for the assumed superiority of middle-class values and standards was rarely questioned, particularly within the social circle of Waifs and Strays supporters. Such an outcome would be less acceptable today, but the criticisms result more from a change of perspective than from hitherto undiscovered evidence of failures in the Society's care.

Postscript

It would be a pity to conclude this study of nineteenth century child care policy without asking whether such an exercise has anything more than academic value. Can the interventions of a long-dead group of adults in the lives of the ragged children of the nineteenth century poor have any connection with the policies adopted towards the deprived children of today?

Firstly, it is impossible to examine the work of the rescue societies without becoming aware that a wide range of their concerns are still of pressing interest today. Perhaps this is inevitable, for there is an unbroken thread which closely links the structural framework under which they operated with that of the present child care service. At the most obvious level, the major rescue societies of the nineteenth century, Dr Barnardo's, the Waifs and Strays, and Dr Stephenson's Homes are still actively involved in similar work today; they are still using some of the same buildings both for their administration, and for the care of children. As in the nineteenth century, their influence still extends beyond their own specific fields; a major role is still to inform and complement the broader spectrum of child care policy implemented by the State (90).

At a deeper level, the mechanics of both voluntary and compulsory admissions to care were laid down in the late nineteenth century; place of safety orders, parental rights resolutions and the grounds under which care orders are made, all remained virtually unchanged for about a hundred years. Inevitably the legislation has coloured the perspective

through which the circumstances of deprived and malfunctioning families have been viewed. A major legacy has been the tacit acceptance of an adversarial relationship between parents and child care organisations, in which the interested parties are assumed to hold conflicting views as to the optimal method of caring for the child. At the time of writing it remains to be seen whether the radical changes introduced by the 1989 Children Act will create a new climate of partnership between the parties concerned (91).

However, perhaps the most important structural continuity is to be found in the uninterrupted assumption that the most appropriate method of addressing the problems of deprivation and delinquency is to separate the child from his parents or other relations. This study has shown that only a minority of children were rescued by the Waifs and Strays Society from homes in which there was a serious risk of abuse or neglect. Current statistics show that less than 10% of children who enter care today are at similar risk of ill-treatment. The majority of children who come into care now, as then, are voluntarily admitted at the request of their parents. Section 1 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, marked a step towards redressing this situation by making it the duty of local authorities to offer advice, guidance and assistance (including both material and financial aid) to diminish the need to receive children into or keep them in care (92). However, the poor law principle of less eligibility has never been entirely eradicated, and the necessary funds to achieve these aims have never been made available. Hill and Laing analysed the published statistics for 1974-5 on the provision of funds

under this clause: in only seven local authorities did the budget amount to over 10p per head of the population, average grants to families were less than fifteen pounds (93). Thus there has never been a time at which the recommendations made by Alexander Thomson in the 1840s, that deprived children should be offered comprehensive day-care which would obviate the need for them to be separated from their families, have been seriously considered. By and large, each generation of social workers has adopted the assumptions of their predecessors, that the separation of families is a necessary part of child care work.

Studies such as this not only demonstrate the continuity of the structures in which current child care policies are implemented, they also emphasise how many of the issues which concerned the nineteenth century participants have yet to be resolved. In recent years there have been heated debates over issues such as access between separated children and their parents, the relative merits of fostering and residential care, and the extent to which parents physically or sexually abuse their children (94). It is salutary to note that all these questions were also being debated a hundred years ago. Social work is peculiarly subject to the influence of fashion: a deeper historical perspective might lead policy-makers to be wary of taking precipitate action in favour of, for instance, the closure of all residential homes or the curtailment of parental access to all children who have remained in care over a certain period. Increased awareness of the persistence of the debate should enable participants to develop a clearer understanding of the extreme complexity of many of the arguments: there may well be no final,

clear-cut, answers to some of the questions at issue.

Finally, an analysis of the historical material may increase our awareness of the intractability of some of the problems posed by the need to care for separated children. For instance, this study produces evidence to suggest that, a hundred years ago, foster homes were particularly subject to unexpected breakdown, that parents encountered exceptional difficulties in maintaining contact with their separated children, and that those who removed children from their parents were often unable to sustain a commitment to befriend and advise them throughout their years of dependency. Studies of children in care today produce very similar findings. The rate of breakdown for foster placements is lower than that in my study, but is still at an unacceptably high level of around 30% (95). Millham et al. have found that even with vastly improved transport and communications facilities, parents still encounter both deliberate and unintentional obstacles to maintaining contacts with children in care (96). The parish ladies may have disappeared, but the frequent job-changes of professional social workers still demonstrate a lack of personal commitment to the outcome for individual children. Perhaps the most telling evidence of all is the finding that, as a last resort, children who had demonstrated through ill-health or maladjustment, a long-term inability to maintain themselves, were returned to the parents from whom they had previously been removed. Such evidence tallies with Parker and Farmer's observations on the care of separated children today, for then, as now, in spite of all the good intentions, the only participants who were ultimately obliged to show a permanent

commitment towards the most problematic children were their own, natural parents (97).

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND SOURCES

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6. Re Blisset, [1774], Lofft 748.
7. Quoted in a note to R.v.Greenhill, [1836], 4 Ad & E. 644.
8. Lyons v.Blenkin, [1820-21], Jac. 246.
9. Giffard v. Giffard, quoted in Blisset's Case, Lofft 748.
10. W. Blackstone:op.cit., p.438.

11. W. Blackstone:op.cit., p.451.
12. Ivy Pinchbeck and Margaret Hewitt:Children in English Society Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1973, Vol 1, p.237
13. W. Blackstone:op.cit., p.439.
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15. P.B.Shelley:The Necessity of Atheism, Worthing, 1811.
16. P.B.Shelley:Queen Mab: a philosophical poem, with notes. London, 1813.
17. Shelley v. Westbrooke, 1817, Jac.267
18. The Times, 3. 2. 1817
19. Wellesley v. Duke of Beaufort, 1826, E. R. 38, p.249.
20. Ibid., p. 239-240
21. Quoted in R. H. Graveson and F. R. Crane A Century of Family Law, 1857-1957, Sweet and Maxwell 1957, p.xv.
22. De Manneville v. de Manneville, [1804], 10 Ves 52.
23. Eversley:op.cit., p.543.
24. R.v.de Manneville, [1804], 5 East 221.
 Although this case has been cited in several textbooks as an extreme example of the common law's interpretation of the father's right to custody, and even condemned as an erroneous decision in one article, it is worth noting that , far from being torn from the mother's breast, the baby in question was being wet-nursed at the time, and, at eight months old, was unlikely to have been dependent upon breast-milk for survival!
 See W.Clarke Hall:The Law Relating to Children, Stevens and Sons, London, 1894., p.1; Eversley,op.cit., p.536; Simpson,op.cit., p114; Brenda Hoggett:Parents and Children, Sweet and Maxwell, London, 1977, p.6.; Seymour D. Thompson: 'In Controversies touching the custody of children': Criminal Law Magazine and Reporter, Vol 7, 1886.
25. De Manneville v. de Manneville, [1804], 10 Ves 52.
26. R. v. Dobbryn, 1817, 4 Ad and E, 644.

27. See Lord Eldon, 1821, in an unidentified case, quoted by Jacob in Lyons v. Blenkin, [1820], Jac. 264, Note 5.
28. In re Agar-Ellis. Agar-Ellis v. Lascelles, C.A., 1883, p323
29. Per Lord Eldon, 2 Russ, p.21.
30. Simpson, op.cit., p.147.
31. Whitfield v. Hales, [1806], 2 Ves., 492.
32. E.p. Fynn, [1848], 2 De G. and Sm. 474.
33. In re McGrath, I Ch 1893, p.148.
34. Seymour D. Thompson, op. cit., p.11, note 3.
35. E.p. Fynn, [1848], 2 D.G. and S., 457.
36. Warde v. Warde, [1849], 2 Ph., 786.
37. Anon, [1851], 2 Sim, N.S. 54.
38. Swift v. Swift, [1865], 11 Jur. N.S. 148, 458.
39. Lyons v. Blenkin, [1820], Jac 245.
40. Ibidem Jac. 253. c.f. also R.v.Gyngall, C.A. 1893, in which it is asserted that this was common practice, (2. Q.B.D., 1893, 240, 249.)
41. Shelley v. Westbrook, [1817], Jac. 267.
42. Warde v. Warde, [1849], 2 Ph. 792.
43. The cases mentioned by Lowe and White all date from the 1960's onwards: N.Lowe and R.A.H.White: Wards of Court, Butterworths, London, 1979, Chapter 11.
44. R. v. Gyngall, 2. Q.B. 1893, 248.
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46. Manchester, op.cit., p.376.
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48. Anon, London 1838
49. Second Reading Debate on the Custody of Infants Bill, Hansard, Third

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50. Lady Caroline Norton: The Separation of Mother and Child by the Law of Custody of Infants Considered, Roake and Varty, London, 1838, p.12-15; Hansard, Third Series, Vol XXXIX, col.1087; Vol XLVIII, col.162; Vol. XLIX, col.493.
51. Custody of Infants Act 1873, 36 and 37 Vict. c.12, Section II
52. Custody of Infants Act 1839, 2 and 3 Vict. c.54, Section 1V
53. Wellesley v. Duke of Beaufort, [1826] E.R.38, p.247.
54. Guardianship of Infants Act 1886, 49 and 50 Vict, c.27
55. Guardianship of Infants Act 1925, 15 and 16 Geo.V c.45.
56. Earl of Shaftesbury in second reading debate on a bill 'for more effectually suppressing juvenile mendicancy and vagrancy' Hansard Third Series, Vol.128, col.1208. This bill failed, but was one of the forerunners to the Reformatory and Industrial Schools Acts.
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57. A.V.Dicey: Lectures on The Relation between Law and Popular Opinion in England during the Nineteenth Century, Macmillan and Co., 1914, (Second Edition), Lecture VII.
58. Vaccination Act 1853, 16 and 17 Vict. c.100
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59. First Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords appointed to enquire into the Execution of the Criminal Law, especially respecting Juvenile Offenders and Transportation, PP 1847, Vol.VII, Mr Serjeant Adams Report, p.14
60. Lord John Russell, speaking in House of Commons Committee after second reading of Infant Felons Bill, 1840, Hansard, Third Series, Vol.LV, col.1184
61. Return of any infants who, in pursuance of an Act of 3 and 4 Vict. c.90, may have been assigned by the High Court of Chancery to the Care and Custody of any Person or Persons specifying the name and age of such Infants, the Name or Names of any Person or Persons to whom such Infants may have been assigned etc., PP 1841, Vol XX, p.513
62. Captain Williams' evidence to the Select Committee on Criminal and

Destitute Juveniles, PP 1852, Volume VII, para 90

63. Ibidem, para 77.
64. Ibidem, para 12.
65. See for instance: Report of the House of Lords Select Committee on Juvenile Offenders and Transportation, PP 1847, Volume VII . Reports of Select Committees on Criminal and Destitute Juveniles, PP 1852, Volume VII; PP 1852-3 Volume XXIII
66. 20 and 21 Vic. c.48, s.vi
67. 24 and 25 Vic. c.113
68. Prevention of Crimes Act 1871, 34 and 35 Vic. c.112.
69. Education Act 1876 ,39 and 40 Vic. c.79.
70. Industrial Schools Act Amendment Act, 43 and 44 Vic. c.15
71. 24 and 25 Vic. c.113, s.9 (4)
72. 43 and 44 Vic. c.15 , preamble.
73. See case of M.S., N.S.P.C.C. Annual Reports II, May 1885-86; see also Waifs and Strays sample case no.3.
74. Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act 1889, 52 and 53 Vict. c.44.
75. PP 1884, c.3876
76. Ibidem xxvii
77. Ibidem xxiii
78. Ibidem xxiii
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81. Earl of Meath in second reading debate on the Adoption of Children Bill, Hansard, Third Series, 16.7.89, Vol.CCCXXXVIII, p.505
82. B.S.Rowntree: Poverty, a Study in Town Life, Macmillan 1901
83. W. Blackstone, op.cit., p.441.

84. Chapter 11, below, examines the truth of this assertion in some detail
85. R.A.Parker: unpublished paper on industrial schools given at Dartington meeting, February 1984.
86. See Simpson:op.cit., p143-4. 36 and 37 Vict.c12,s.2 presumably would only have superseded this with respect to voluntary agreements between parents, not those between parents and third parties.
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90. Joy Parr: The Home Children: British Juvenile Immigrants to Canada,1868-1924 Unpublished Ph.D thesis, Yale University, 1977
91. Health and Social Services and Social Security Adjudications Act 1983,c.41,Schedule 1, 12 A-G
92. PP 1884,c3876, p.xxxi/42
93. See N.S.P.C.C.: R.F.Colam:The Prevention of Cruelty to Children London, 1885
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The first edition of W.Clarke Hall's:The Law relating to Children was published by Stevens and Sons in 1894
94. Law Quarterly Review,1889,p.450
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96. I.Pinchbeck and M.Hewitt:op.cit., 1973, p.583-4.
97. Charles Dickens:Bleak House, Collins Classics Edition 1952, p.230

98. Children Act 1908, 8 Edw.VII, c.67, Section 11.2
99. I.Pinchbeck and M.Hewitt :op.cit.,p.592-5.
100. See Elizabeth Gaskell:Ruth,London,1853, passim
101. See First Annual Report of the Poor Law Commission, PP, 1835, Vol.XXXV, Appendix A., p.60, quoted in I.Pinchbeck and M. Hewitt:op.cit.,1973, p.501
102. Mr Gregory's evidence to the Select Committee on the Infant Life Protection Bill, PP 1890, Volume XIII,p.41.
103. Re Elizabeth Daley,[1860],2 F & F,258.
104. R.v.Gyngall,[1893], 2 Q.B.,232.
105. R.v.Barnardo (Jones' case) 1 QB 1891,p.202
106. R.v. Gyngall, [1893], 2 Q.B., 232
107. Re Elizabeth Daley, [1860], 2 F & F,258
108. Re Margaret White,[1848], 10 L.T.,349.
109. R.v.Nash LR 10 QBD 456
110. R.v.Barnardo (Jones' case) 1 QB 1891, p202
111. Ibidem, p.207
112. Adoption of Children Bill,1889,s.9
113. House of Lords Debate on The Adoption of Children Bill, 1889, Hansard,Third Series,Vol. CCCXXXVIII, col.508.
114. House of Lords Debate on the Adoption of Children Bill, 1890, Hansard, Third Series, Vol. CCCXLIII,col.1395
115. Gillian Wagner:Dr.Barnardo,Eyre and Spottiswoode,1980,p.234-5
116. 48 and 49 Vic. c.69,s12
117. Report of the House Of Lords Select Committee on Poor Relief,PP 1888,Vol.XV, p.23.
118. Poor Law Amendment Act 1889, 52 and 53 Vict. c.56, S.1
119. Poor Law Amendment Act 1899, 62 and 63 Vict. c.37, S.1

CHAPTER THREE: EARLY DEVELOPMENTS IN POLICY

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Anonymous (attributed to E. de M. Rudolf): The First Forty Years: A Chronicle of the Church of England Waifs & Strays Society 1881 - 1920, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1922
C de M. Rudolf: Rudolf of the Waifs, Unpublished biography held by the Society, n.d.
2. In 1869, the biographer of Alexander Thomson, another philanthropist who was active in the industrial schools movement, wrote:
'He knew too, what the statesmen of the present century do not seem to know, or have unlearned - that Popery is a political principle as well as a religion, involving the recognition of a foreign potentate, and that no state, Catholic or Protestant can, with safety to itself, allow such a mixed system to develop itself without important checks and limitations'. (George Smeaton: Memoir of Alexander Thomson, Edmonton and Douglas, Edinburgh, 1869)
3. Gillian Wagner: Barnado, Eyre & Spottiswoode Ltd, 1979 pp219-232
4. See Adoption of Children Bills, 1889, 1890
Hansard Third Series, 16.7.89, Vol. CCCXXXVIII, Col. 502;
25.4.90, Vol. CCCXLIII, Cols. 1402, 1405;
20.5.90 Vol. CCCXLV (H L 98) Col. 2;
5.6.90 Vol. CCCXLV (H C) Col. 5.
5. Returns of all children committed to any Reformatory or Industrial School not conducted in accordance with the religious persuasion on to which the young offender appeared to the committing authority to belong, PP 1867, LV11, p.871, p.889; PP 1867-8, p.262, LV11, p.845; PP 1868-69, p.221, LV11, p.845; 1868-69, p.221, LI, p.551; 1872, L, p.855
See also provisions made for the religious instruction of children under the care of the poor law, following the complaints made by Roman Catholics to the 1861 Select Committee on Poor Law Relief, PP, 1861, Vol.X, quoted by I.Pinchbeck and M.Hewitt: Children in English Society, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973, Vol.II, p.529-532
6. Our Waifs and Strays, Jan 1891, p.3, May 1891, p.6
7. In 1900 Barnardo held a collection day which he described and advertised as Waif Saturday, in aid of 'The National Incorporated Waifs Association'. This was a cause of some consternation to the Waifs and Strays Society which remonstrated that its supporters had been misled into donating to a rival organisation. Barnardo replied that he had invented the title 'Waifs and Strays' and had used it for several years before the Anglican Society had stolen it from

him. The issue was dealt with in an increasingly acrimonious correspondence in the Church Times, between E.de M. Rudolf and George Code, 'Hon Sec. to the National Incorporated Waifs Association (otherwise Dr Barnardo's). Code's final letter amounted to a character assassination of Rudolf, and the Church Times refused to print it. Code collected all the letters into a pamphlet designed to illustrate a fable of ingratitude, and had them privately printed. (See Church Times:7.12.00; 14.12.00; 21.12.00; George Code (ed.):Waifs and Strays: An Old Fable in a New Setting 1901

8. Night and Day, April 1895: reproduced in Our Waifs and Strays June 1895, p.24-5
9. Our Waifs and Strays, June 1895, p.24-5
10. Sample case nos: 91, 101, 376
11. E de M. Rudolf's evidence to the Departmental Committee on the Education and Maintenance of Pauper Children in the Metropolis, (Mundella Committee), PP 1896, Vol. XLIII, para. 12,928
12. Waifs and Strays Society: Annual Report, 1886, p.5
13. See sample cases 56,88,119
14. J.W.Horsley claimed that, as clerical secretary, it was his function 'to see that the children should be baptised on reception into the Home and that, ordinarily, they should be confirmed before they left'. (Speech to the Seventh Anniversary Conference, reported in Our Waifs and Strays, March 1888, p.5
- 15.?? Sample case nos.
16. See sample case no. 70
17. Our Waifs and Strays, March 1888, p.4
18. Sample case no. 248
19. In sample case no. 212. Mrs Crawshay to E de M. Rudolf, unpublished letter, 23.1.1896
20. Sample case no. 12
21. See W.Chance: Children Under the Poor Law, Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1897
Gertrude Tuckwell: The State and its Children, Methuen, 1894
I. Pinchbeck and M. Hewitt: op.cit., 1973
R.A. Parker: Away from Home: A Short History of Provision for

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W. Clarke Hall: The Queen's Reign for Children, T.F.Unwin, 1897

22. Erving Goffman: Asylums, Anchor, 1961
See Charity Organisation Reporter, July 1875, p.104
23. Charles Dickens: Little Dorrit, 1857,
24. Florence Davenport Hill: Children of the State, Macmillan, 1868
Report of Mrs Nassau Senior as to the Effect on Girls of the System of Education at Pauper Schools, printed in Third Annual Report of the Local Government Board, PP 1874, XXV, p.311
25. E. Tufnell: Pauper Schools: Observations on the Report of J.N.Senior to the LGB as to the Effect on Girls of the System of Education at Pauper Schools, PP 1875, Vol LXIII, p.299.
See also Letter by Mrs Senior being a reply to the Observations of Mr Tufnell, PP 1875, Vol LXIII, p.343
26. See Miss Poole's evidence to the Mundella Committee, PP op.cit. 1896, paras 4027-4100
W. Chance: op.cit., 1897
Walter Monnington and Frederick Lampard: Our London Poor Law Schools, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1898
27. See Florence Davenport Hill: op.cit. 1868
Jane Nassau Senior: op. cit. 1875
Young Servants: Their First Places: The Reformatory and Refuge Journal, July-September, 1885, pp.88-90
28. See Joanna Hill: Some Results of Boarding Out, Our Waifs and Strays, January 1892, p5-6
Rev. Izat: A Plea for Small Church Homes in the Country: Our Waifs and Strays, September 1887, p.7
29. Comment on the latest report of the LGB: Charity Organisation Reporter, November 1878, p.194
30. Report of a Drawing Room Conference on the Boarding-Out of Pauper Children, Charity Organisation Reporter, October 1876, p.139
31. See Boarding out Regulations for Dr Barnardo's Homes, published in the Evidence to the Mundella Committee PP op.cit. 1896, Para. 9159
Waifs and Strays Boarding Out Regulations, Published in Our Waifs and Strays May 1886, P.7
Report of J.J. Henley Esq: Poor Law Inspector to the Poor Law Board, on the Boarding Out of Pauper Children in Scotland, PP Vol. LVIII 1870 p.104

32. See Unpublished records of the Bath Boarding Out Committee, 1869 - 1895
Unpublished records of the Aston Boarding Out Committee, September - November 1884
33. See Dr. Barnardo's evidence to the Mundella Committee, PP, op.cit. 1896, para. 9110 et. seq.
Unpublished records of Dr. Stephenson's Home (National Childrens Home), 1880-1900
The Christian Million, June 1887, p.508
June Rose: For the Sake of the Children, Hodder & Stoughton, 1987 ,p.186-7
34. C. de. M. Rudolf: Rudolf of the Waifs, unpublished memoir held by the Society, n.d.
See also John Stroud: op.cit. 1971, p. 34
35. Rev T Guthrie DD: quoted in Lilian M Birt, The Childrens Home Finder, J.Nisbet and Co. 1913, p.192
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37. John Stroud op.cit. 1971, p. 34 - 5
38. Waifs and Strays Society: Handbook for Workers, 1895, Pt. 2, S2, p.13
39. Waifs and Strays Society: Annual Report, 1886, p.177
40. See for instance sample cases 38,381
41. Sample case no. 391
42. Sample case no. 41
43. See John Stroud: op.cit. 1971, p. 93
44. Sample cases 46, 84
45. See Waifs and Strays Society : Handbook for Workers, 1895, p.3
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46. See Dr. Barnardo's Homes: Details of separate branches, published in Dr Barnardo's Homes: 27th Annual Report, 1892
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48. See Miss A. L. Lee's evidence to the Mundella Committee, PP op.cit. 1896, par. 10,041 - 10,042

49. Letter from Miss A. L. Lee: Our Waifs and Strays, Oct 1883, pp.4-5
50. Miss A. L. Lee's evidence to the Mundella Committee:
PP op.cit. 1896 paras 10,029-10,342
51. John Stroud: op.cit. 1971 p.56
52. Sample case no. 352
53. Cui Bono: Our Waifs and Strays, Dec 1888, p.10
54. Ibidem
55. See sample case no. 389. This child's mother worked in a workhouse, but had to conceal the connection when she applied for a place for her son to enter the Reedham Asylum for Fatherless Children
56. Charity Organisation Reporter, passim
Circular of 2nd December 1871: First Annual Report of the Local Government Board (Goschen Minute) PP 1871-1872 Vol.XXVII Appendix A., No.20, p.63
See also Twenty-Second Annual Report of the Poor Law Board, PP 1870, Vol. XXV, Appendix A, No. 4
57. See for instance sample cases 303, 353
58. Charity Organisation Reporter, 23.2.1882, p.52-3
59. Anonymous (Attr. E. de M. Rudolf): op. cit. 1922, p.24-25
60. Report of House of Lords Select Committee on the Law relating to the Protection of Young Girls: PP 1882, Vol. XIII para 3
61. W. T. Stead: The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon, (The Report of the "Pall Mall Gazette's" Secret Commission), London 1885
62. PP op.cit. 1882, p.9
63. Report of the House of Lords Select Committee on the Law relating to the Protection of Young Girls:PP 1881, Vol. IX para. 646
64. Ronald Pearsall: The Worm in the Bud: The World of Victorian Sexuality, Pelican Books 1971, pp. 367-378
65. Ronald Pearsall: op.cit. 1971 p. 375 Criminal Law Amendment Act Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885, 48 and 49 Vic. c.69
66. Edward Bristow: Vice and Vigilance: Purity Movements in Britain since 1700, Gill and Macmillan 1977, p. 104

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73. Anonymous (attrib. to E. de M. Rudolf): 1922, pp. 12,35,178
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74. Rosa M. Barrett: Ellice Hopkins: A Memoir, Wells Gardner, Darton & Company 1907, p.5
75. Quoted in: Edward Bristow: op. cit. 1977, p. 97
76. Ellice Hopkins: The Practical Working of the White Cross Movement, Hatchards, 1886. This was among several resolutions which were listed on the White Cross Army membership card.
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78. Ibidem, p.103
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79. Anonymous (attr. to E. de M. Rudolf), 1922, pp. 26, 29, 34
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80. J. W. Horsley: Am I My Sister's Keeper? In Ellice Hopkins: Drawn Unto Death: A Plea for the Children Coming Under the Industrial Schools Amendment Act 1880, Hatchards 1884
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82. Our Waifs and Strays June 1888, p.6
83. See The Reformatory and Refuge Journal, October-December 1887, p.362
84. J. W. Horsley's evidence to the House of Lords Select Committee on the Law relating to the Protection of Young Girls, PP 1882, Vol.XIII, Appendix B, p.52
The lack of concrete evidence of extensive child prostitution is also noted in Judith R. Walkowitz:Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class and the State, Cambridge University Press, 1982 edition, p.17
85. John Stroud: op. cit. 1971, p. 33
Anonymous (Attrib. E. de M. Rudolf):op. cit. 1922 p.18
Letter from K.F.Gibbs:Our Waifs and Strays, July 1883 p.10
86. Waifs and Strays Society: Annual Report, 1885 p.9
87. R. A. Parker: Research in preparation (Children Leaving Poor Law Schools)
88. Sample case no. 127
89. C. de M. Rudolf: op. cit. n.d. p. 14
90. George Cruikshank: Our Gutter Children, 1869, (broadsheet)
91. Report by Andrew Doyle Esq to the President of the Local Government Board on the Emigration of Pauper Children to Canada:PP 1875, Vol. LXIII; PP 1877, Vol. LXXI.
R. A. Parker: Research in preparation (Children Leaving Poor Law Schools)
Ivy Pinchbeck and Margaret Hewitt: Children in English Society Volume II, From the Eighteenth Century to the Children Act 1948, p.564-573
92. John Stroud: op. cit. 1971, p. 83
93. John Stroud: op. cit. 1971, p. 60
94. See Our Waifs and Strays, June 1888, p.2-3
95. Sample case no. 110
96. Sample case no. 398

CHAPTER FOUR: LOCAL NETWORKS AND THEIR INFLUENCE

1. Our Waifs and Strays, June 1884, p. 2
2. Bath Boarding Out Committee, unpublished records, 1869 - 1895
3. Duties of Local Secretaries, Our Waifs and Strays, May 1886, p. 7
4. See sample cases 112, 136, 208
5. Sample case no.13; see also Waifs and Strays case no.2324 (brother)
6. Sample case no.64
7. Waifs and Strays Society: Constitution (Article XVIII), in Annual Report, 1886, p.187
8. Sample case no.297; see also Waifs and Strays case no.3493
9. Our Waifs and Strays, May 1889, p.3
10. Sample case no. 250
11. Sample case no.255
12. Anonymous (attrib. E.de M. Rudolf):op.cit.1922, p.34, p.37
13. John Stroud:op.cit. 1971, p.44
14. Sample case no. 179, unpublished letter from Miss Drummond to E. de M. Rudolf, 14.7.1891.
See also sample cases 252, 203, 151, 102
15. Sample case no.57, unpublished letter from Mrs Arbuthnot to E. de M. Rudolf ,26.1.1889
16. Sample case no.97; see also sample cases 126, 304,84
17. Sample case no.328, unpublished letter from Miss Robinson, Romford local secretary, to E.de M. Rudolf,10.4.1896
18. Sample case no.84, unpublished letter from Mrs Roseveare to E.de M.Rudolf, 13.12.01
19. Sample case no. 84
20. Data on this point were not systematically recorded and this assertion comes from my memory of individual case histories. The one exception was Mary W., sample case no.304. Her experience is described in some detail in Chapter 11, pp.404-5

21. Industrial Schools Amendment Act 1891, 54 and 55 Vict., c.23
Industrial Schools Amendment Act 1894, 57 and 58 Vict.,c.33
22. Our Waifs and Strays, June 1888, p8
23. J.W.Horsley's evidence to the Departmental Committee on the
Education and Maintenance of Pauper Children in the Metropolis,
PP 1896, Vol XLIII, paras 6326-6329
24. Sample case no.137
25. Sample case no. 152
26. See also sample cases 110, 134
27. George Smeaton:Memoir of Alexander Thomson, Edmonton and Douglas,
1869, p.336
28. Ibidem pp.334-339;
Alexander Thomson: Punishment and Prevention, James Nisbet and Co.,
1857, p.187 et.seq.
29. Alexander Thomson argued his case before the Select Committee on
Criminal and Destitute Children (see PP 1852-3, Vol.XXIII, pp. 287-
307).
See also George Smeaton:op.cit, pp.345-353
30. Letter from Miss A.L.Lee, published in Our Waifs and
Strays, October 1883, p.5. Also quoted in C.de M.Rudolf: op.cit.,
p.54
31. The Reformatory and Refuge Journal, March 1890, pp.90-94
32. John Stroud:op. cit., 1971, p.127
33. Ibidem, p.129
34. See sample cases 271 ,273 ; also Waifs and Strays cases 3715-3728
35. Anonymous (attributed to E. de M. Rudolf):The First Forty Years: A
Chronicle of the Church of England Waifs and Strays Society,
1881-1920, 1922, S.P.C.K.,p.21
36. Waifs and Strays Society:Annual Report, 1886, p.189
37. Ibidem, pp.176-7
38. Ibidem,pp.9-10

39. Ibidem, p.181
40. Sample case no. 348, unpublished letter from Miss Maingay to E. de M. Rudolf, 29.2.1899
41. Early admission form, in use until 1887, Question 24
42. Admission form in use from 1887, Question 27
43. See especially Gillian Wagner: Dr Barnardo, Eyre and Spottiswode, 1979, Chapter 13
Also descibed in detail by June Rose: For the Sake of the Children Inside Dr Barnardo's: 120 Years of Caring for Children, Hodder and Stoughton, 1987, pp 97-99
44. Sample case no.248
45. Waifs and Strays case no. 1 .Stroud refers to this child as Isabella Trotter-Williams, but this is not the name given on the case-paper. See J.Stroud: op.cit., 1971, pp.49-51
46. The Child's Guardian, May 1890, p.51
47. London Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children: Second Annual Report, 1886, p.16
48. London Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children: First Annual Report, 1885, p.1
49. Sample case no. 3; Waifs and Strays case no.1237 (brother)
50. NSPCC: Our Inspectors: A National Duty to Provide More, quoted in G.K.Behlmer: Child Abuse and Moral Reform in England 1870-1908, Stanford University Press, 1982, p.180. Behlmer also states that in the late nineteenth century, the NSPCC Inspector for York provided several years' supervision for some of his families on his list
51. London Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children: First Annual Report, 1885, p13
52. The Child's Guardian, January 1887, p.1
G.K.Behlmer: op.cit., 1982, p.175
A copy of the formal warning issued by the society to parents suspected of neglect or abuse was printed in The Child's Guardian, May 1888, p33
53. The Times, 13.1.1885;
J.Stroud: op.cit. 1971, p.139
54. See for instance T.J.Barnardo: Am I Unfit?, Night and Day Vol.XIV

pp.1-66

55. E. de M. Rudolf's evidence to the Departmental Committee on the Education and Maintenance of Pauper children in the Metropolis, PP, op.cit., 1896, see especially paras.12,912-12,974

CHAPTER FIVE: PARISH LADIES AND PATRONAGE

1. See for instance: Report of Annual General Meeting, Our Waifs and Strays, June 1888, p.2-6; Benjamin Waugh: The Gaol Cradle: Who Rocks It?: A Plea for the Abolition of Juvenile Imprisonment, W.Isbister, 1880; James Greenwood: The Seven Curses of London, London, 1869; Andrew Mearns: The Bitter Cry of Outcast London, An Enquiry into the Condition of the Abject Poor, Congregational Union, 1883
2. 1891 Census, PP1890-1 [c.6422] Vol.xciv, p.vii
3. Sample case no.106
4. Sample cases 43,44,78,92,97,259;
See also Martha Vicinus: Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women 1850-1920; Virago, 1985 ,pp.57-84
5. Anonymous (attributed to E.de M. Rudolf): The First Forty Years, A Chronicle of the Church of England Waifs and Strays Society, S.P.C.K., 1922, p.44
6. Sample cases 233, 319, 388
7. Sample cases 395, 213, 70
8. Our Waifs and Strays, December 1887, p.3
9. Our Waifs and Strays, November 1889, p.5
10. Letter from "Enquirer", Our Waifs and Strays, March 1891, p.6
11. Our Waifs and Strays, June 1891, p.2
12. Dennis R. Mills: Lord and Peasant in Nineteenth Century Britain, Croom Helm, 1980
M. K. Ashby: Joseph Ashby of Tysoe, Merlin Press, 1974
13. Sample case no.50
14. M.K.Ashby: op.cit., 1974, Chapter 10
15. Kate Taylor: Autobiography, published in John Burnett, Ed.: Destiny Obscure: Autobiographies of Childhood, Education and

Family from the 1820s to the 1920s, Allen Lane, 1982

16. Sample case no.271
17. Dennis R. Mills: op.cit., 1980, p.36; M.K. Ashby:op.cit., 1974 pp. 187-8, 205-6
18. Sample case no.357, unpublished letter from Rev Wheeler to Lady Mitford, 30.3.1891
19. See: Gareth Stedman-Jones:Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship between Classes in Victorian Society, Peregrine 1976, p.259 et seq.
District Visiting Societies,Charity Organisation Reporter, 14.12.1876, pp175-6
20. Rev. Prebendary Plant, speaking at Standon: Our Waifs and Strays, September 1888, p.3
21. Dennis R. Mills:op.cit.,1980. p.181
22. Our Waifs and Strays, November 1884, p. 1-2
23. Sample case no.55
24. Sample case no.200
25. Sample case no.75
26. F. Prochaska:The Voluntary Impulse: Philanthropy in Modern Britain, Faber and Faber, 1988, p.52
27. In case-papers for Maria R. (Sample case no.356), unpublished letter from Olive House to E de M.Rudolf, n.d.
28. Waifs and Strays case no.941 (sister to Maria R.,sample case no.356)
29. Waifs and Strays case no.2057
30. Sample case no.296
31. Sample case no.381, unpublished letter from M. Stone, Hillingdon to E. de M. Rudolf, 27.3.1896
32. Bill Bowder:Children First, Mowbray,1980,p. 12
33. Sample case no. 348
34. Sample case no.303

35. There was considerable controversy over the most appropriate method of inspecting boarded-out children: one body of opinion advocated the necessity of taking off their clothes to ascertain whether they were being abused, while others felt that such an intrusive examination would be detrimental to the relationship between supervisor and foster-parent.
See Our Waifs and Strays, May 1892, p.7; July 1892, pp.2-3; August 1892, pp.11-12; September 1892, p.7; October 1892, pp.11-13; November 1892, pp.10-11
36. Sample case no.222
37. See sample case nos: 38,381, 146
38. Sample case no.200
39. Sample case no.12, unpublished letter from Miss Bere to E de M. Rudolf, 6.3.1888
40. Ibidem, unpublished letter from Miss Bere to E. de M. Rudolf, 6.11.1895
41. Sample case no.12
42. Miss Lee's evidence to the Departmental Committee on the Education and Maintenance of Pauper Children in the Metropolis, PP 1896, Vol.XLIII, para. 10,309
43. Ida S.'s supervisor wrote: 'I really cannot remember the names of all the Waifs I look after, I only remember their Christian names'. (sample case no.118, unpublished letter to E. de M. Rudolf, n.d.).
44. Sample case no.179, unpublished letter from Mrs Drummond to E. de M. Rudolf 14.7.91
45. Sample case no.179
46. Sample case no.38, unpublished letter from Mrs Truell to E de M. Rudolf, 16.1.1893
47. Ibidem, unpublished letter from Mrs Truell to E. de M. Rudolf, 14.12.1894 (see also unpublished letter dated 26.9.94)
48. See Pamela Horn: The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Servant, Gill and Macmillan 1975, Alan Sutton, 1986 edition. She quotes Mrs Beeton's recommended annual wage for a stable boy as being £6-£12 in 1906 (p.129).
49. Sample case no.38, unpublished letter from Mrs Truell to Mrs

Stevenson, December 1894

50. Waifs and Strays case nos:1047,1148, 1162, 1195, 1253, 1256,1388,1619
51. Waifs and Strays case no. 1148; sample case nos: 374,6
52. Sample case no.19, unpublished letter from Miss Haldane to E de M. Rudolf, 2.10.1888
53. Ibidem, unpublished letter from Miss Haldane to E.de M. Rudolf, 20.9.1892
54. Ibidem, unpublished letter from Jack P. to Society's headquarters, and reply, 1919. Neither letter mentions that Jack's two siblings were also admitted to the Waifs and Strays.
55. Our Waifs and Strays, March 1890, p.10
56. Sample case no. 100
57. See Waifs and Strays Society:Annual Report, 1886, p.215
58. Sample case no. 372
59. Sample case no. 318
60. Sample case no. 262, unpublished letter from Constance Wilde to E. de M. Rudolf, 27.3.1893
61. Sample case no. 262
62. Sample case no. 260
63. Bill Bowder:Children First, Mowbray, 1980, p.10
64. See case nos 315, 304
65. The Reformatory and Refuge Journal,1884, p.276
66. Ibidem, p.277
67. Ibidem,p.311
68. Anonymous (attributed to E. de M. Rudolf):op.cit., 1922, p.94-95
69. Frances Low: The Orphanage: Its Reform and Recreation, Nineteenth Century and After, September 1909, p.443
70. Children and Young Persons Act 1933 23 and 24 Geo.5,c.12, s.94-95

CHAPTER SIX: THE PARENTS' CIRCUMSTANCES

1. Waifs and Strays admission form, in use from 1887, Question 26
2. House of Lords Select Committee on Poor Relief, PP1888, Vol.XV passim, but see for instance para 945.
3. B.S.Rowntree: Poverty, a Study of Town Life, Macmillan, 1902;
See also: Michael Anderson: Family Structure in Nineteenth Century Lancashire, Cambridge University Press, 1971;
Joy Parr: Labouring Children, British Immigrant Apprentices to Canada, 1869-1924, Croom Helm, 1980, Chapter 1
My data suggest that the relationship may not have been so coldly economic as both Parr and Anderson contend. See Chapter 7 below.
4. Jean Heywood: Children in Care: The Development of the Service for the Deprived Child, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965, p.65;
Ivy Pinchbeck and Margaret Hewitt: Children in English Society, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973, Vol.II, p.654
5. Charles Booth: Life and Labour of the People of London, Macmillan, 1902 Edition, First Series, Vol.I, p.33, Vol.II, pp.18-24
B.S.Rowntree: op.cit 1901, Chapter IV: the Poverty Line
6. B.S.Rowntree: op.cit 1901, p299
7. Charles Booth: op.cit, Vol. I, p.33 et seq.
B.S.Rowntree: op.cit 1901, p.110, p.132
8. See sample cases 362 and 118
9. Gareth Stedman-Jones: Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship Between Classes in Victorian Society, Peregrine Books, 1984 edition, passim.
G.Phillips and N.Whiteside: Casual Labour: The Unemployment Question in the Port Transport Industry 1880 - 1970, Clarendon Press, 1985
10. I am indebted to Noel Whiteside for her help in devising the system of classifying the occupations of parents and children used in this and other tables.
11. Gareth Stedman-Jones op cit. 1984, p.64
12. Waifs and Strays case no. 915, brother to sample case no.353
13. Sample case no.245

14. Figures extracted from 1891 Census, PP 1893-4 [c.7058] Vol.CVI, Tables 4 and 5, pp. vii-xxv
15. Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws and the Relief of Distress; Minority Report, PP 1909, Vol XXXVIII, p.36.
16. Sample cases 97, 323
17. Sample cases 245,303
18. Sample cases 333, 138
19. B.S.Rowntree:op.cit.,1901, p.82. I have not been able to duplicate this result.
20. B.S.Rowntree:op.cit.,1901, p.206
21. Ibidem, Chapter 5
22. Sample case no.182
23. This figure is in fact slightly above the average for single mothers in outside employment, though if one removes from the latter group the seventeen mothers who apparently earned nothing and who may have artificially depressed the results, their mean income comes to 8s 3d
24. Sample case no.226
25. Sample case no.128
26. Sample case no.306, application form.
27. Sample case no.364, unpublished letter from Mme. de Watteville to Mr Buchanan, 10.4.1888
28. Ivy Pinchbeck and Margaret Hewitt:op.cit., 1973, Vol II, p.587
See also Report from the Commissioners on the Administration and Practical Operation of the Poor Laws, PP, 1834, Vol.XXXVI,p.346
29. Sample case no.56
30. PP op.cit., 1834, p350
31. Sample case no.138
32. See I.Pinckbeck and M.Hewitt:op.cit.,1973,p.595, p.601
Report of the Select Committee on the Protection of Infant Life
PP 1871, Vol.VII
Report of the Select Committee on the Infant Life Protection Bill,

PP1890, Vol XIII, passim

33. See: Report of the Select Committee on the Infant Life Protection Bill,
PP, op.cit, 1890 ,passim
The Times: Report of trial of Margaret Waters and
Sarah Ellis, 22-24 September, 1870
The Times: Report of trial of Mary Hall, 14 December 1870
The Times: Report of trial of Amelia Dyer , 22-23 May, 1896
The Child's Guardian, February to April 1990, passim
I.Pinchbeck and M.Hewitt: op.cit, 1973, pp597,613-621
34. See especially sample cases 316, 56
35. Sample case no.380
36. Sample case no.282
37. Sample case no. 316, unpublished letters from Mrs C. to E.de
M. Rudolf, n.d. and 22.3.04
38. Ibidem, unpublished letter from Mrs C. to E. de M. Rudolf,
22.3.04
39. See John Triseliotis: In Search of Origins, Routledge and Kegan
Paul, 1973
40. Sample case no. 148, unpublished letters from Lily J. to E.de M.
Rudolf, 9.9.18, 23.9.18
41. Joy Parr:op.cit., 1980, pp.72-74
42. Sample case no.148, unpublished letter
43. Charles Booth op.cit.Vol. XVII, pp.41-42;
Henry Mayhew: London Labour and the London Poor, Cass and Co.
1851, reprinted 1967, p.20
George R.Sims: How the Poor Live, Chatto and Windus, 1883, pp.24-5
Joy Parr:op.cit., 1980, p.64
44. Sample case no.310
45. In 1891, there were 1,386,167 women acting as indoor servants, of
whom just over one in three were aged between fifteen and nineteen.
However, across the age ranges, there were, at this time, slightly
more women engaged in industrial or manufacturing occupations
(1,840,898) than in service occupations (1,759,555). The figures
are taken from the 1891 Census, PP 1893-4 [c.7058], Vol.CVI,1,
Tables 4 and 5, pp. vii-xxv
46. Sample case no.290

47. Sample case no.83
48. Sample case no.232
49. Sample case no.261
50. Sample cases 200, 232, 241
51. Sample case no.109
52. Sample case no.3
53. Sample case no.7
54. See for instance sample case no.308, application form
55. See for instance sample case no.152
56. Sample case no.330
57. Sample cases 352, 353

CHAPTER SEVEN: PARENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS ADMISSION

1. Sample case no. 299
2. Sample case no. 302, unpublished letter from Miss Clarke to E. de M. Rudolf, 22.9.1894
3. Michael Anderson:Family Structure in Nineteenth Century Lancashire, Cambridge University Press, 1971, p.171
4. Ibidem, pp.178-9
The traditional solidarity of working-class communities is demonstrated in studies such as: M.Young and P.Willmott:Family and Kinship in East London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957
5. Sample case no.91
6. Sample case no.47
7. Sample cases 126, 315; see also sample case no. 395
8. Sample case no.292
9. R.A.Parker:Care Obligations and Financial Obligations, unpublished paper, 1986

10. Sample cases 33, 317
11. Sample cases 80, 42
12. See The Times: Report of trial of Margaret Waters and Sarah Ellis, September 22-24, 1870
The Times: Report of trial of Amelia Dyer, May 22-23, 1896
I. Pinchbeck and M. Hewitt: op.cit., 1973, pp 597, 613-620
13. Sample cases 400, 61
14. Sample cases 332, 306
15. Sample case no. 387
16. Sample case no. 80
17. Sample case no. 338
18. B. S. Rowntree: op.cit., p. 43
See also: Ellen Ross: Neighbourhood Networks, History Workshop, 1985
19. Sample cases 385, 102, 67
20. Sample case no. 376
21. Question 26, Waifs and Strays admission form, in use from 1887
22. Ibidem, Question 27
23. See sample case no. 357.
The transportation of juvenile criminals was virtually abandoned in 1853, when sentences of transportation for less than fourteen years were abolished (See I. Pinchbeck and M. Hewitt: Children in English Society, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973, Vol. II, p. 549).
24. Joy Parr: Labouring Children: British Immigrant Apprentices to Canada, 1869-1924, Croom Helm, 1980, p. 72
25. Ibidem, pp. 21-23
The Reformatory and Refuge Journal, passim
B. S. Rowntree: op.cit. 1901, p. 136
26. Joy Parr: op. cit. 1980, p. 17
27. The Society was aware of the financial implications of accepting very young children, and there is some suggestion that a number of them were refused admission both on these grounds and 'for the sake of the instinctive affection which we find in even degraded parents

towards them'. See Evil Surroundings:Our Waifs and Strays, November 1885, p.6

28. This point is further explored in Chapter 10 below. See also Joy Parr:op.cit. 1980, p.74-75

CHAPTER EIGHT :THE SOCIETY'S POINT OF VIEW

1. See for instance: Gillian Wagner:Barnardo, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1979
Joy Parr: Labouring Children: British Immigrant Apprentices to Canada, 1869-1924, Croom Helm, 1980
June Rose:For the Sake of the Children inside Dr Barnardo's:120 Years of Caring for Children, Hodder and Stoughton, 1987
A.M.Platt:The Child Savers, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1969
2. Our Waifs and Strays, December 1886, p. 7
3. Ellice Hopkins wrote to Barnardo several times to criticise his flamboyant methods of fund-raising. A letter of January 1882 began: 'I return your detestable advertisement: if you could only realise the harm this flashy claptrap sort of advertisement does your work, how it injures the sacredness of it...(quoted in Rosa M. Barrett:Ellice Hopkins:A Memoir, Wells Gardner, Darton and Co., 1907.

See also: June Rose:op.cit., 1987, p.57
Letter from 'W' to Charity Organisation Reporter, 27.1.1881,p.22
4. June Rose: op.cit. p.222
5. June Rose: op.cit. p.46-59
Gillian Wagner: Barnardo, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1979, pp.121-135
R.A.Parker: Research in preparation (Children Leaving Poor Law Schools)
6. Our Waifs and Strays, Nov 1887 p.6
7. Charity Organisation Society: unpublished letters concerning the Waifs and Strays Society, 1898
8. Sample case no. 68
9. See Our Waifs and Strays, Sept 1885, p1
10. See notes accompanying the published list of children awaiting admission:Our Waifs and Strays, September 1893, p.135, September 1894, p.331

11. J.W.H: Am I My Sister's Keeper?, published in Ellice Hopkins:Drawn unto Death: A Plea for Children Coming Under the Industrial Schools Act Amendment Act 1880 Hatchards, 1884. In her introduction Ellice Hopkins describes Horsley as an officer 'appointed by the Reformatory and Refuge Union to work the Industrial Schools Act Amenment Act'. She also mentions that the 'The Church of England Waifs and Strays Society is willing to open fresh industrial homes if £250 to meet initial expenses is raised' (p.19).
See also Our Waifs and Strays, Aug 1885,p.3
12. Our Waifs and Strays, July 1891, p.12
13. Our Waifs and Strays, July 1892, p.1
14. John Stroud:Thirteen Penny Stamps: The Story of the Church of England Children's Society (Waifs and Strays) from 1881 to the 1970s, Hodder and Stoughton, 1971, p.140
15. See Charity Organisation Society: Confidential Report on the Waifs and Strays Society (unpublished),29.7.1897, p.2
16. Sample case no. 104
17. See Principle in Charity,Our Waifs and Strays, November 1885, p.2-3. This issue appears to have been particularly prominent in 1885-6,see also: Evil Surroundings, Our Waifs and Strays, November 1885, p.6 ; Relieving Bad Parents,Our Waifs and Strays, June 1886, p.3
18. Charity Organisation Society:Confidential Report on the Waifs and Strays Society (unpublished), 29.7.97, p.3
19. See Charity Organisation Society: unpublished papers on Waifs and Strays Society
20. Unpublished letter from Mary Herbert to E. de M. Rudolf, 29.4.1893, in sample case-papers 277, but referring to another child.
See also sample cases: 209, 151, 270, 312.
21. Sample case no. 345
22. Ibidem
23. Sample case no. 263
24. Sample case no.26
25. Sample case no. 349

26. Sample case no. 309
27. Our Waifs and Strays, November 1886, p.4
28. See for instance: Waifs and Strays Society:Annual Report, 1888, p.10
29. Our Waifs and Strays, May 1886 p. 7-8
30. Waifs and Strays Society:Annual Report, 1883 p.22
 Anonymous (attributed to E.de M.Rudolf):The First Forty Years:A Chronicle of the Church of England Waifs and Strays Society 1881-1920, S.P.C.K., 1922, p.22
31. Our Waifs and Strays, June 1885, p.3
32. Waifs and Strays Society:Annual Report, 1883, p.22
33. Sample case no. 255
34. For a further discussion of this point see I.Pinchbeck and M.Hewitt: Children in English Society ,Vol.II, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973, p.584
 Florence and Mabel R. were admitted to the Myrtle Street Orphanage when their mother died , but were discharged some weeks later when doubts were cast on the validity of their parents' marriage certificate (See sample case no. 31 and Waifs and Strays case no.4164).
35. June Rose, op.cit. p.119-120
36. Sample case no. 148
37. Sample case no. 269
38. Ibidem, unpublished letter from Mrs T. to E. de M. Rudolf, 20.7.93.
39. Sample case no. 103
40. Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act 1889, 52 and 53 Vict. c.44, s.5
 Sample case nos. 122, 176, 344
41. Sample case nos. 344, 325
42. Sample case no. 157
 See also The Child's Guardian, 1887-1889, passim
43. Our Waifs and Strays, November 1885, pp.2-3, May 1886 p.3, July 1886, p.5 . The latter article refers readers to Cardinal Manning

and Benjamin Waugh: The Child of the English Savage, Contemporary Review, May 1886, p.687 'as declaring the principles on which we work'

44. Sample case no.293
45. Custody of Children Act 1891, 54 and 55 Vict. c.3, s.2
46. Sample case no. 367

CHAPTER NINE: CUSTODY AND THE OBLIGATION TO MAINTAIN

1. Sample case no. 34
2. Sample case no. 325
3. Sample case no. 89
4. Sample case no. 104; see also no. 200
5. Sample case no. 23
6. Sample case nos. 132, 242
7. Charity Organisation Society: unpublished letter from C.S. Loch to E. de M. Rudolf, 24.05.1899
8. Sample cases 400 and 363
9. Sample case no. 191
10. Sample case no. 210
11. Sample case no. 387
12. Sample case no. 346
13. Sample cases 381, 38
14. Sample case no. 226
15. See Report of the Departmental Committee on the Education and Maintenance of Pauper Children in the Metropolis (Mundella Committee), Chapter XIV, PP 1896, Vol.XLIII, para 381
16. See for instance: Re Elizabeth Daley [1860], 2 F & F, 258
Re Margaret White [1848], 10 L.T., 349
R. v. Barnardo (Jones' Case) 1 QB 1891, p202
Adoption of Children Bills, 1889, 1890

17. Sample case no. 381
18. See for instance Emily B. supervised by the headmistress of Bromley High School for Girls (30) and Elizabeth D. supervised by one of the staff of Hastings and St. Leonards College (158)
19. Sample case no. 212
20. Sample case no.295 and Waifs and Strays case no.3997 (sister)
21. Sample case no. 162
22. Sample case no. 318
23. Sample cases 370 and 38
24. The Christian Million, June 1887, p.508
Our Waifs and Strays, August 1891, p.13
25. Sample cases 155 and 234
26. Sample case no. 241
27. Sample case no. 42
28. Sample cases 155, 234
29. Custody of Children Act 1891, 54 and 55 Vict. c.3, s.2
30. Sample case no. 336, unpublished letters from Miss Empson to E. de M.Rudolf, 13.08.1894
31. Ibidem, unpublished letter from Reverend Grubbe to E. de M. Rudolf, 24.08.1894
32. Sample case no.2, unpublished letter from Frank S. to E.de M. Rudolf, 02.08.1889
33. Ibidem, unpublished letter from Mr Moore to E. de M. Rudolf, 20.08.1889
34. See, for instance, R. v. Barnardo 1889 (re Martha Tye). Reported in The Times, 24.5.1889, p.9
R.v. Barnardo 1890 (re John James Roddy).
Reported in The Times, 8.5.1890,p.3
36. Sample case no. 2
37. In 1880 there were 101 deaths from starvation in London alone

(See Charity Organisation Reporter, 5.5.1881, p.100, quoting PP, 1881, Vol.LXXV, p.731)

See also Charity Organisation Reporter, 30.11.1876, p168; 17.7.1879, p.186

B.S.Rowntree: Poverty, a Study of Town Life, Macmillan, 1901, p.206

38. The Reformatory and Industrial Schools Act 1866, 29 and 30 Vict., c.118, s.14, states:
Any person may bring before Two Justices or a Magistrate any Child apparently under the Age of Fourteen years that comes within any of the following Descriptions, namely, -
That is found begging or receiving Alms (whether actually or under the Pretext of selling or offering for Sale any Thing), or being in any Street or Public Place for the purpose of so begging or receiving Alms;
That is found wandering and not having any Home or settled Place of abode or proper guardianship, or visible means of subsistence;
That is found destitute, either being an Orphan or having a surviving Parent who is undergoing Penal Servitude or Imprisonment;
That frequents the company of reputed Thieves
39. Sample case no.193
40. Sample case no.241
41. Sample case no. 52
42. Sample case no. 102
43. Report of Andrew Doyle to the President of the Local Government Board on the Emigration of Pauper Children to Canada, PP 1875, Vol LXIII, p.12
44. Joy Parr: Labouring Children: British Immigrant Apprentices to Canada, 1869-1924, Croom Helm, 1980, pp.52-5
45. Ibidem
R.A. Parker: Research in preparation (Children Leaving Poor Law Schools)
Philip Bean and Joy Melville: Lost Children of the Empire: The Untold Story of Britain's Child Migrants, Unwin Hyman, 1989
46. See sample case no. 359
47. Ibidem. See also R.A. Parker: Away from Home: A Short History of Provision for Separated Children, Barnardo's 1990, typescript copy, p.33
48. Sample case no. 344

49. Sample case no. 269
50. Sample case no. 103
51. Waifs and Strays Society: Emigration Consent Form , in use during the sample period
52. Sample case no. 27, unpublished letter from Edith M. to Mrs Brandreth, September 1895
53. See sample cases 15,18,36,72, 359,360, 362,384
54. Sample case no.326
55. Sample cases 77, 100, 103
56. Sample case no.104; See also Charles D., sample case no.387
57. Sample cases 27, 171 and 61
58. Waifs and Strays Society:Handbook for Workers, 1895, p.19
59. See G. Stedman-Jones:Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship between Classes in Victorian Society, first published Oxford University Press, 1971, Peregrine Books Edition, 1984 pp.281-314
60. T.J.Barnardo: The Dangerous Classes, Night and Day, 1879, p.66
61. See Samuel Smith M.P.:Social Reform, Kegan Paul and Co., 1884
Samuel Smith M.P.:National Progress and Poverty,
W. Reeves,1884
William Booth: In Darkest England and The Way Out, Salvation Army, 1890
Charles Booth: Life and Labour of the People of London,
Macmillan, 1902-4, Vol.I, Series I, pp.164-170
62. See sample cases 381, 38
63. Our Waifs and Strays, April 1890, p.1;
Waifs and Strays Society: Annual Report, Complete Accounts, 1889
64. Waifs and Strays case 2676, sister to sample case no.155
65. Waifs and Strays case 2676, unpublished letters from E. de M. Rudolf to Marylebone Union , 01.01.1906, and later to Croydon Union, 21.06.1906
Early parental rights resolutions were known as 'poor law adoptions' and Phoebe was 'adopted' by the guardians under the Poor Law Amendment Act 1889, 52 and 53 Vict. c.56

66. E. de M. Rudolf's evidence to the Mundella committee, PP op.cit. 1896, para 12,913
67. Sample case no. 225
68. Sample case no. 41, unpublished letters from Miss Stansfeld to E.de M. Rudolf, 13.10.1893; 30.04.1894
69. Sample cases 84, 190 and 105
70. Sample cases 181,34
71. See Waifs and Strays case 2676 and sample case no. 84
72. See printed form, used as scrap paper in sample case no.316
73. Sample case no. 56
74. Sample case no. 84
75. Sample case no. 84, unpublished letter from Mrs Roseveare to E. de M. Rudolf, 29.04.1899
76. Sample case no. 84
77. Sample case no. 148; see also no. 391
78. Similar limitations are still characteristic of modern child care organisations. For a further discussion of this point see R.A.Parker: Caring for Separated Children, Macmillan, 1980; E.Farmer and R.A.Parker: Trials and Tribulations: A Study of Children Placed Home on Trial, forthcoming.

CHAPTER TEN: SEVERANCE

1. Waifs and Strays case no. 1634. Also reported in The Child's Guardian, Dec 1888, p.107
2. T.J.Barnardo: Worse than Orphans, F.J.Shaw, 1886
3. Reported in The Child's Guardian, Jan 1887, p.3;
See also: The Law and Juvenile Beggars, The Child's Guardian, Dec.1889, p.213
4. See especially T.J.Barnardo: op.cit. 1886, and other published pamphlets, passim
The Reformatory and Refuge Journal, January to March 1885
Children I have Known, Our Waifs and Strays, June 1885, p.5

5. T.B. Stephenson: The Children's Home: General Survey, 1888
6. See for instance: Bishop of Bath and Wells' Speech on the Opening of the Frome Home: Our Waifs and Strays, Aug 1888, p.2
Unattributed: Honora's Effort, published in serial, Our Waifs and Strays, June 1884-Feb. 1885
Report of the Departmental Committee on the Education and Maintenance of Pauper Children in the Metropolis, (Mundella Report), PP 1896, Paras 12, 975, 6363
7. Quoted in Obituary of Sir J.T. Middlemore, Birmingham Mail, 17.10.1924
8. Waifs and Strays: Annual Report, 1893, p.13
9. Waifs and Strays: Annual Report, 1892, p.14
10. Waifs and Strays: Annual Report, 1897, p.15
11. Figures extracted from: Dr Barnardo's Homes: Annual Report 1890
Dr Stephenson's Home: Annual Report, 1889
Both these societies were founded several years before the Waifs and Strays. There is some indication that the percentage of children emigrated from Dr Stephenson's Home and from the Waifs and Strays was beginning to drop by the 1890s. Of those children who were admitted to Dr Stephenson's Home in 1888, 49% emigrated; 10% of children in the Waifs and Strays sample (i.e. admitted between 1887 and 1894) went to Canada.
12. See Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act 1894, 58 and 59 Vict. c.44, s.6 (5)
Industrial Schools Amendment Act 1891, 54 and 55 Vict. c.23, s.1
13. See R.v. Barnardo QBD 1889, pp.310-316
R. v Barnardo, (Jones' case) 1QB 1891, p.202; HL, 1892, pp.226-341
14. See T.J. Barnardo: op.cit., 1886;
Kidnapped!, F.J. Shaw, 1885;
Is Philanthropic Abduction ever Justified? Night and Day, Nov. 1885, pp.149-152.
Parr calculated that 15% of girls and 9% of boys sent to Canada by Barnardo during a similar period to the Waifs and Strays study had been philanthropically abducted. See Joy Parr: Labouring Children: British Immigrant Apprentices to Canada, Croom Helm, 1980, p.67
15. Ibidem, p.71
For a fuller analysis of the figures see Joy Parr: The Home Children: British Juvenile Immigrants to Canada, 1868-1924, unpublished PhD thesis, Yale University, 1977, p.153-156

16. See for instance sample cases 235,357
17. Sample case no. 255
18. Joy Parr:op.cit.,1980, p.75-76
19. Sample case no.357
20. Sample case no.152
21. Sample case no. 312
22. Philip Bean and Joy Melville: Lost Children of the Empire: The Untold Story of Britain's Child Migrants,Unwin Hyman, 1989,pp.136-139
23. Sample case no. 200
24. Sample case no. 138
25. Sample case no. 22
26. Joy Parr:op.cit., 1977, p.164
27. Sample case no. 133
28. R.A.Parker has found that about 10% of those poor law children who were brought before the justices in order to give their formal consent to emigration refused to do so. (Unpublished research on children leaving poor law schools).
29. Sample case no. 363
30. Sample case no.78, unpublished letter from H.Upsher to E.de M.Rudolf, 6.2.1890
31. Sample case no. 103
32. Sample case no. 283
33. Sample case no. 344
34. Sample case no. 100
35. See sample cases 70, 269
36. Sample case no.155
37. Joy Parr:op.cit,1977 pp. 157-8

38. See sample case no. 132, unpublished letter from C.A.Stein to E.de M.Rudolf, 1890
39. See R.A.Parker:Away From Home: A Short History of Provision for Separated Children, Barnardo Publications,1990, p.33-34
40. Aston Union Boarding Out Committee: unpublished papers, 1884
41. In 1895, the report from one home stated: 'our family in Rochdale is much diminished just now, as many of the boys are paying holiday visits. Two are with friends in London, two in Liverpool, one in Blackpool and one in Stockport': Our Waifs and Strays, Sept.1895, p.141. See also sample case nos. 138, 380
42. Sample case no.2, see above, p.299
43. Sample case no.248, unpublished letter from Miss Ralfs to E. de M.Rudolf, 10.6.1898
44. Sample case no.248
45. Sample case no. 235, unpublished letter from Mrs Furley, Hull home, to E.de M.Rudolf, 21.3.99
46. Sample case no.235
47. See for example sample case no. 304, unpublished letter from Mrs Johnston, St Olave's home to E.de M. Rudolf, 2.7.1900
48. Sample case no.235, unpublished letter from A.Moulding, Leeds D.P.Aid Society (sic) to E.de M. Rudolf, date indecipherable
49. See sample cases 12, 235.
John Burnett: A History of the Cost of Living, Penguin 1969, p.216
50. The carrier who served the villages around Winchester at the turn of the century would take two to three hours to travel five miles, 'stopping at cottages and houses en route to pick up commissions', see Betty Hartfield, The Village Carrier, unpublished.
51. Pamela Horn:The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Servant, Alan Sutton, 1986, p. 96
B.Seebom Rowntree and May Kendall: How the Labourer Lives, Thomas Nelson,1913, p.142, 155, 90
52. See John Stroud:Thirteen Penny Stamps:The Story of the Church of England Children's Society from 1881-1970, Hodder and Stoughton,1971,p.98

53. Question 26, Waifs and Strays admissions forms in use from May 1887, (unpublished)
54. E.de M.Rudolf's evidence to the Departmental Committee on the Education and Maintenance of Pauper Children, (Mundella Committee), PP 1896, Vol.XLIII,para. 12975
55. Ibidem para. 6363
56. Bill Bowder: Children First, Mowbray, 1981, p.12.
57. See sample cases 77, 270
58. Sample case no. 369
59. Sample case no. 165
60. See sample cases 2,39,270,292
61. Sample case no 39
62. See sample cases 19 ,113, 367
63. Sample case no. 283
64. Sample case no. 47
65. Sample case no. 270
66. See sample case no.270
67. Sample cases 1, 74, 156, 228
68. Sample case no. 38
69. See sample cases 8, 9, 69, 70, 131, 400
70. Sample case no. 244
71. See for instance pamphlets published by Barnardo (note 12 above)
Custody of Children Act 1891, 54 and 55 Vict. c.3
Industrial Schools Amendment Act 1891, 54 and 55 Vict. c.23
Industrial Schools Amendment Act 1894, 57 and 58 Vict.
72. Sample cases 152, 134; see also sample case no. 312
73. Sample case no. 9
74. Sample cases 22, 152, 328

75. Sample case no. 359; see also no. 126
76. Sample case no. 339; see also no. 264
77. See for instance sample cases 22, 31
78. Custody of Children Act 1891, 54 and 55 Vict. c.3, s.2
79. Sample case no. 152
80. Sample case no. 334, unpublished letter from Miss Ralfs to E. de M. Rudolf, 12.6.03 . Beatrice was one of several children whose discharged was opposed even though they over fourteen at the time the request was made. She was seventeen when she left the Society's care
81. Custody of Children Act 1891, 54 and 55 Vict. c.3, s.1
82. PP op.cit. 1896, para.12,955
83. Joy Parr: op.cit. 1977, passim
84. Sample cases 235, 339
85. Sample case no. 334; unpublished letter from Mrs Lloyd, Wandsworth Home to E. de M. Rudolf, 28.6.97.
86. See Our Waifs and Strays, Feb.1894, p.214

CHAPTER ELEVEN: CONCLUSIONS: THE CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCE

1. Charity Organisation Reporter, 25.01.77; 14.08.79
2. See for instance:
Report of the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working
Classes, PP 1884-5, Vol. XXX
Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws and the Relief of
Distress, PP 1909, Vol. XXXVIII
B. Seeborn Rowntree: Poverty, A Study of Town Life, Macmillan, 1901
Charles Booth: London Labour and the London Poor Macmillan, first
published 1889, 1902-4 edition.
3. Charles Booth: op.cit., Poverty, Series One, Vol. I, pp.38-39, 61, 99, 133
4. B.S. Rowntree: op.cit. 1901, p.152, et. seq
Charles Booth: op.cit. 1902-4, Poverty, Series One, Vol. 3, p.17-20
5. PP op.cit., 1884-5
PP op.cit., 1909. See especially Royal Commission on the Poor

- Laws: Miss E. Williams: Report on the Condition of Children whose Parents are in Receipt of Outdoor Relief, PP, 1910, Vol.LII, p.32
6. B.S. Rowntree and May Kendall: How the Labourer Lives, Thomas Nelson, 1913, p. 329
 7. B.S. Rowntree: op. cit 1902, pp. 263 - 284, (Budgets Class 1)
 8. B.S. Rowntree and May Kendall: op.cit., 1913, pp.81-83
Rowntree's rural study was not completed until 1913, and is thus not entirely comparable with the conditions under which the Waifs and Strays families lived. He calculates that rising prices had led to a drop in real wages of about 7% for agriculture workers in the first decade of the twentieth century, and thus, in relative terms, his farm labourers were likely to be slightly worse off than those who were the fathers of the Waifs and Strays sample children. However, the differential is probably not significant, particularly when one considers that the fathers of Waifs and Strays children were likely to have been among the lowest paid labourers of their time.
 9. Jack Lanigan: Incidents in the Life of a Citizen, in John Burnett (ed): Destiny Obscure: Autobiographies of Childhood, Education and Family from the 1820s to the 1920s, Allen Lane, 1982; Penguin Harmondsworth, 1984 edition, p.95-98
 10. Our Waifs and Strays, December 1887, p.10, quoting from: Mr H.Gardner and Miss Tabor: A Threepenny Pamphlet on Penny Dinners for Poor Children, n.d.
 11. B.S. Rowntree: op.cit 1902, p. 214
 12. Royal Commission on the Poor Laws: Dr. Parsons: Report on The Condition of the Children who are in Receipt of the Various Forms of Poor Law Relief in Certain Parishes in Scotland, PP op.cit. 1910, p. 236
 13. Elementary Education Act 1870, 33 and 34 Vict. c.75, s.74
Elementary Education Act 1900, 63 and 64 Vict. c.53, s.6 (1)
 14. Figures extracted from Report of the Committee of Council on Education (England and Wales), PP 1893-4, Vol.XXVI, Table No.16, p.679
See also A.C.O.Ellis: Influences on School Attendance in Victorian England, British Journal of Educational Studies, Vol. XXI (1973), pp314-5, 317-9
Attendance Problems caused by Rural Poverty (Log Book of Harlton School, Cambridgeshire, March-June 1888) in Anne Digby and Peter Searby: Children School and Society in Nineteenth Century England, Macmillan 1981, p.122

15. Jack Lanigan: op.cit., 1984, p.99
16. Elementary Schools: Return giving the (1) Number of Children attending Elementary Schools who are known to be Working for Wages or Employed for Profit, with their ages, Standard Occupations, Forms of Work and Rates of Pay and (2) the Different Classes of Employment into which the Boys and Girls attending Elementary Schools in England and Wales went on Leaving School during some Complete Year, PP 1899 LXXXV, p.5
17. See A.C.O.Ellis:op.cit. 1973, p.316
18. G.M.Tuckwell: The State and its Children, Methuen, 1894, Chapter 10 pp. 137-157
19. PP op.cit. 1899, p.25
20. Jack Lanigan: op. cit., 1984, p.97
See also PP op.cit. 1899, pp.25-29
21. G.M.Tuckwell: op.cit. 1894, p.146
PP op.cit. 1899, pp.12-14
22. See Our Waifs and Strays, May 1886, p.2; July 1887, p.7; August 1889, p.9
23. Our Waifs and Strays, Jan.1885, p.4
24. Our Waifs and Strays, May 1886, p. 7
25. Cui Bono, Our Waifs and Strays, December 1888, p.11
26. Sample cases 12, 263
27. Sample cases 289, 118
28. See sample case no. 12
29. Sample case no. 332
30. Sample cases 4, 303
31. Sample case no. 37
32. Ethel Williams' Report: PP op.cit. 1910, p.94
33. Dr Parsons' Report: PP op.cit. 1910, Appendix C., Table IV, p.236
34. Ibidem p. 54

35. Ibidem p. 75
36. G.M. Tuckwell: op.cit p. 47
37. Dr Parson's Report: PP op.cit. 1910, p.58
Miss Lee's evidence to the Departmental Committee on the Education and Maintenance of Pauper Children in the Metropolis, PP 1896, Vol.XLIII, para. 10,096-10,099
38. Ibidem, para. 10,306
39. Ibidem, para. 10,079
40. Sample case no. 98, unpublished letter from Mrs Maberley to E. de. Rudolf, 24.2.1890
41. Sample case no. 364
42. Letter from Joanna Hill to editor, Our Waifs and Strays, January 1893, p.6
43. B.S. Rowntree: op.cit., pp. 206-9;
1891 Census PP 1893-4 [c.7058] Vol. CVI, p.5
44. Sample case no. 255
45. See sample cases 261, 303, 380
46. See sample cases 158, 205, 303
47. Sample cases 38, 387
48. John Stroud: Thirteen Penny Stamps: The Story of the Church of England Children's Society from 1881-1970, Hodder and Stoughton, 1971, p. 44
49. Our Waifs and Strays, April 1886, p.2
50. Rev. J.R.Izat: A Plea for Small Church Homes in the Country, Our Waifs and Strays, Sept.1887, p.7. Rev.Izat explained that: 'At first we decided to adopt the Watford Orphan Asylum scale of diet for the children, but afterwards added more meat, as we thought that many of the children who came from bad homes, and had been ill-fed in their infancy, required more'.

However, it should be noted that as late as 1889, the committee of Hanley Castle Home in Malvern, were claiming to spend as little as threepence three farthings a day on food for each of the twelve boys in their care. The weekly amount spent on food for the older boys in this home was almost fivepence less than Rowntree's

- recommended minimum. Our Waifs and Strays, April 1889, p.3
51. Our Waifs and Strays, December 1887, p.10
 52. John Stroud: op.cit p. 48
Naked and Ye Clothed Me, Our Waifs and Strays, March 1887, p.2
 53. Bill Bowder: Children First, Mowbray, 1980, p.21
 54. Ibidem, pp.10,16; but see John Stroud: op.cit. 1971, p.103
 55. See Our Waifs and Strays: October 1889, pp.4-5
 56. B.S. Rowntree: op.cit 1902, p. 115
 57. Subscribers to the old-established orphanages had an opportunity to vote for children whose cases were being considered for admission. Applications were not considered according to need, but according to the number of influential subscribers who had been persuaded to vote for a particular child. The Waifs and Strays claimed that their criteria for admission were a considerable improvement on this system, which was widely considered to be unfair. (See sample case no. 389)
 58. Our Waifs and Strays, Jan.1892, p.9
 59. Our Waifs and Strays, June 1889, p.3
 60. Our Waifs and Strays, January 1892, p.9
 61. See sample cases 73, 130, 166, 201, 278, 330
 62. See for instance Joy Parr: Home Children: Juvenile Immigrants to Canada, 1868-1924, PhD thesis, Yale University, 1977. Abridged version published as Joy Parr: Labouring Children: British Immigrant Apprentices to Canada 1869-1924, Croom Helm, 1980
Philip Bean and Joy Melville: Lost Children of the Empire: The Untold Story of Britain's Child Migrants, Unwin Hyman, 1989
R.A. Parker: Research in preparation (Children Leaving Poor Law Schools)
 63. Sample case no. 327
 64. Selina K., the sister of a sample child, began her working life as a pupil teacher, with the financial support of her local committee. However, after a year, the arrangement was terminated. (Waifs and Strays case no.2134)
 65. Sample case no. 155, unpublished letter from E. de M. Rudolf to C.M.Powell, Superintendent of the Caversham Home, 24.11.04

66. Sample case no. 394
67. G.Stedman-Jones:Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship between Classes in Victorian Society, Oxford University press, 1971, Peregrine Books, 1984 edition, p.70
68. Sample cases 96, 220, 182
69. Waifs and Strays case no. 5889 (outside sample), unpublished letter from Thomas T. to E. de M. Rudolf, 07.07.14
70. Laundry homes were a fairly common form of residential care for older adolescent girls. Many of them were really commercial laundries, in which children undertook a major part of the work under the guise of 'industrial training' in washing and ironing
71. Quoted in Our Waifs and Strays, February 1887, p.7
72. See sample cases 22 and 225
73. Sample case no. 304, Mrs German to Rudolf (her emphasis) 9.7.00
74. R.A. Parker: Research in preparation (Children Leaving Poor Law Schools)
75. Sample case no. 315
76. See 1891 Census, PP 1893-4 [c.7058] Vol.CVI, 1, Tables 4 and 5 pp.vii-xxv
77. R.A. Parker: Research in preparation (Children Leaving Poor Law Schools)
78. G. M. Tuckwell:op.cit. 1894, p.54
79. Ibidem, p.71
80. Shortly after training at one of the Society's homes, Alice G. was able to earn £24 per year as a head laundress, 'quite phenomenal wages for so young a girl' (Our Waifs and Strays, May 1892, p.4)
81. Our Waifs and Strays, February 1885
82. See cases 127, 164, 249, 252
83. See Our Waifs and Strays, photographs of children at the Beckett Home (November 1892), the Mumbles Home (August 1894), the Hull Home (October 1894), Cold Ash Home (November 1894)

84. Quoted in John Stroud: op.cit., 1971, p.110
85. Sample case no. 349
86. Bill Bowder: op. cit. 1980, p.10
87. The Gordon Boys Home, for instance, refused to readmit children who had been sacked from jobs found for them. See sample case no. 144
88. See sample case no. 348, referred to in an unpublished letter from Mrs Maingay to E. de M. Rudolf, 24.2.1899
89. See Our Waifs and Strays, December 1890 , p.3
90. See the evidence from Barnardo's, the Children's Society and the National Children's Home to The Independent Review of Residential Care, Ian Sinclair (ed.): Residential Care: The Research Reviewed, HMSO, 1988
Barnardo's and the Children's Society also contributed to the Review of Child Care Law: Report to Ministers of an Interdepartmental Working Party, HMSO, 1985
Recently the voluntary societies have been particularly involved in research on specialist foster placements. See for instance: N.Dixon, R.Flanagan, J.Hardy, S.Kermode, L.Dodson and C.Spencer: Special Fostering: Fostering Children and Young People who are Mentally Handicapped, Barnardo Practice Papers, 1987
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91. Children Act 1989, c.41. See especially Part III
92. Childrens Young Persons Act 1963, c.37, s.1
93. Michael Hill and Peter Laing: Social Work and Money, George Allen and Unwin, 1979, pp.27-28
94. See National Council for One Parent Families: Evidence Submitted for the Parliamentary Social Services Committee on Children in Care, PP 1983, Vol IX, H.C. 26, pp.262-280
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95. G. Trasler:In Place of Parents, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960
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to which the young offender appeared to the committing authority to
belong, PP 1867, LV11, p.871, p.889; PP 1867-8, p.262, LV11, p.845;
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L, p.855

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